

Government proposes offering deputies retirement benefits

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government on Tuesday proposed an amendment to the civil pension law which would provide deputies at the Lower House of retirement benefits. The proposal will be forwarded to Parliament for consideration.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي

King receives Anani, Thneibat

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday sent messages to Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, Lower House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour, Senate Speaker Zeid Rifai and Judicial Council and Court of Cassation President Taher Hikmat in reply to their congratulations on his 63rd birthday. The King sent similar messages to chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mira'i Kaabneh, and other senior officials. In his messages, King Hussein expressed deep appreciation for the officials' cables and praised their continuous efforts to serve the country. Meanwhile, the King on Monday received at his residence in Washington Royal Court Chief Jawad Anani who briefed the King on several issues concerning the country. King Hussein also received Muslim Brotherhood Overall leader Abdul Majid Thneibat, who inquired about the King's health condition and conveyed the movement's greetings and good wishes.

Volume 24 Number 7004

AMMAN WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1998, SHA'BAN 6, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 fils

Gaza airport opened; Prince Faisal leads Jordan's team to ceremony

By Alia A. Toukan

GAZA — Thousands of Palestinians waving flags and banners cheered the opening of the Gaza International Airport yesterday and hailed it as a step towards establishing an independent state.

The airport, to be named Yasser Arafat International Airport, received its first landings from Egypt at 8.30 am carrying officials and super-star Adel Imam, among other Egyptian actors, followed by a Royal Jordanian flight an hour later.

"This is a great and historic day," said His Royal Highness Prince Faisal, heading a Jordanian delegation of over 50 business people, journalists and officials, including Minister of Transport and Public Works Nasser Lawzi, and Director, G.I.A. Middle East of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Khalid Mahdi.

"It is something that the Palestinians are very proud to have and to enjoy. It has been something long sought for, there is nothing (that) make any Arab more proud than to see aircraft flying in and out of Gaza airport, and to see Palestinian aircraft being able to fly," said Prince Faisal, speaking to reporters at the residence of the Palestinian president.

Later, Moroccan, Spanish, Dutch, Austrian, and two Palestinian air carriers landed down on the tarmac. Less noticeable, was an Israeli charter plane carrying

the EU special envoy to the Middle East, Miguel Moratinos, from Tel Aviv.

A beaming Yasser Arafat greeted the long-awaited opening of the airport as a step towards an independent state. "We are definitely heading towards independence," the Palestinian leader told journalists.

"Today we are one step (closer) to Jerusalem, our eternal capital of our coming independent Palestinian state," said chief Palestinian peace negotiator Sa'eb Erekat.

Markedly absent were the Arab states. Apart from Jordan, Morocco, Egypt, and two Palestinian planes funded and sent by Saudi Arabia, no other Arab countries took part in yesterday's event.

Palestinian Minister of International Cooperation and Planning Nabil Sha'ath told the Jordan Times that the three countries' diplomatic ties with Israel facilitated their participation in the opening. Countries that do not have peaceful relations with the Jewish state would have required great efforts by the PNA to bring them into Gaza, Qatar and Oman, which also have diplomatic ties with Israel, did not ask to be involved in the event, he said.

A flight that should not exceed 30 minutes, the trip from Amman to Gaza lasted one hour by plane, as Israel has not yet granted Royal Jordanian the right to fly over Israeli airspace.

Lawzi told reporters that



Palestinian President Yasser Arafat receives HRH Prince Faisal as he arrives at Gaza International Airport at the head of a 50-member Jordanian delegation which took part in the airport's inauguration ceremony

discussions between Jordan and both the PNA and Israel regarding Jordanian flights into and out of Gaza were still on-going. "This issue is still under negotiation and we (have) not yet finalised these discussions."

Very little could be seen of Israelis at the airport, with the exception of the occasional security guards dressed in civilian clothes. But it is known that Israel has the final word on who enters the airport, and that 40 Israeli security

staff will be stationed at the airport to search all passengers.

Following a tour of the Amal Rehabilitation Centre in Gaza, and a lunch hosted for the Arabs and Europeans who flew in for the opening, Jordan and the PNA signed an agreement to operate a daily Royal Jordanian flight to Gaza, as well as a daily flight by the Palestinian Airways to Amman.

The Jerusalem Post reported Tuesday that the PNA is

planning to build another airport in the West Bank within the next year.

The Jordanians and Palestinians held a sideline economic coordination meeting, but little tangible progress was announced at its conclusion, save that Israel must ease its restrictions on Jordan's trade to the West Bank. Both sides said bilateral trade issues hinge on the outcome of Palestinian-Israeli economic discussions, running for six weeks.

Regent, Danish minister discuss peace process, bilateral ties

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday discussed with visiting Danish Minister for Cooperation Affairs Poul Nielsen the Middle East peace process, means of promoting Danish-Jordanian relations and issues of common concern to both countries.

Receiving the Danish official at the Royal Court, Prince Hassan underlined the importance of close cooperation and the exchange of expertise between the two countries in vocational training and consolidating civil society institutions.

Nielsen expressed his country's desire to raise the level of cooperation with Jordan particularly in transferring Danish expertise to the Kingdom. He said Denmark would also like to work jointly on public administration reforms and promoting higher education as well as small size economic projects.

Nielsen said Copenhagen appreciated Amman's role in the building of peace and stability in the Middle East, stressing that Denmark will continue to support efforts towards the establishment of a just and durable peace.

At the meeting, attended by Minister of Foreign Affairs

Abdul Ilah Khatib, Minister of Planning Nabil Ammani and other officials, the two sides reviewed the present situation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

Prince Hassan emphasised the need for the agency to pursue its social, health and educational services to the Palestinian refugees. He cautioned that any reduction in these services would have adverse consequences on the refugees and their living conditions.

Nielsen said Denmark appreciates UNRWA's task and supports measures for enabling it to continue its humanitarian mission. He said Denmark will continue to honour its commitment and contribution to the agency's budget.

The Special Political and Decolonisation Committee (Fourth Committee) of the United Nations General Assembly on Nov. 19 voted to recommend the renewal of the mandate of the UNRWA for another three years, until 30 June 2002, an UNRWA statement released on Monday said.

According to the statement the recommendation came as the committee adopted seven resolutions relating to the work of UNRWA which will

now be referred to the full General Assembly for approval. Voting in the General Assembly plenary is expected in December.

The principal resolution approved on "Assistance to Palestine refugees," was adopted by a vote of 122 in favour to one against (Israel), with one abstention (United States). UNRWA said, introducing the resolution, the representative of Austria, speaking on behalf of the European Union, (EU) said the UNRWA makes an important contribution to the Middle East peace process and to stability in the region, the statement said.

The EU was aware of the financial difficulties which UNRWA continued to face, and it called on all states, "and especially the wealthier states in the region" to offer "all political and financial support to the Agency to enable it to carry out its functions in an appropriate manner," UNRWA said.

The EU statement noted with appreciation that the moves of UNRWA to reform the approaches to its traditional programme activities and to ensure high cost-effectiveness, while maintaining the quality and level of its services, have produced results, UNRWA said.

Iraq's oil-for-food programme extended

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The Security Council decided Tuesday to allow Iraq to sell another \$5.2 billion in oil over six months to buy badly needed humanitarian aid for Iraqis suffering under U.N. sanctions.

In a 15-0 vote, the council renewed the U.N. "oil-for-food" programme and also agreed to let Iraq to buy another \$300 million in spare parts to repair its dilapidated oil facilities.

Iraq has been barred from freely exporting oil since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, which sparked the Gulf war. The council will only lift the sanctions after U.N. arms experts report that Baghdad has destroyed its weapons of mass destruction.

The council agreed to start the oil-for-food programme in 1996 to allow imports of basic necessities such as food and medicine for Iraq's 22 million people.

Iraq had hoped that the current phase of the programme would be the last, and it had tried to persuade the council to merely extend the current phase for two months rather than renew it for six.

Iraq officials have long complained that the unique U.N. programme has merely served to keep sanctions in place. After the vote, the deputy U.S. ambassador, Peter Burleigh, acknowledged criticism that the programme was sometimes inefficient and hadn't met Iraq's nutritional needs.

Palestinian prisoners continue hunger strike

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — A hunger strike by a group of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails entered a third day on Tuesday in what one called a battle for "freedom or death" backed by sympathy protests in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

It was not clear how many inmates were participating in the strike launched on Sunday at Israel's Megiddo prison by members of Fateh, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's mainstream faction in the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

The Israeli army, which administers some of the prisons where Palestinian "security prisoners" are held, said: "We don't elaborate on what goes on in military detention camps."

The prisoners are protesting against Israel's refusal to free them as part of the land-for-security deal it signed with the Palestinians after the U.S.

Middle East summit last month.

Prisoners also have accused the Palestinian leadership of not pressing Israel hard enough to secure their release.

Holding black flags and framed photographs of prisoners, relatives of detainees took a vocal campaign for their release to the edge of the runway at Gaza International Airport during an inauguration ceremony on Tuesday.

"With our blood and souls we will free you, our prisoners," the families chanted from amidst a joyous crowd welcoming the opening of a Palestinian gateway to the world.

"The release of our sons is just as important as the inauguration of the airport," said Harba Al Burdeini. She said her son was serving a 99-year term for leading the Fateh's military wing during the intifada. Under U.S. pressure, Israel agreed at the summit to free 750 prisoners in three stages

over 12 weeks. The verbal agreement was not mentioned in the accord or accompanying letters.

Arafat said Israel's inclusion of 150 common criminals among 250 prisoners released last week violated the spirit of the deal.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his cabinet on Sunday that the remaining prisoners would "come from the reservoir of criminal prisoners without blood on their hands."

In a telephone call to Reuters, a prisoner in Israel's Ashkelon jail said the strike spread to that facility on Tuesday from Megiddo prison.

"The hunger strike will continue until freedom or death. It was started in Ashkelon prison today by Ahmad Kmeil, leader of Fateh's Black Panthers cells during the intifada who was jailed for 16 life sentences," the prisoner said, referring to the 1987-1993 Palestinian

uprising against Israeli occupation.

Another prisoner said the health of one of the hunger strikers at Megiddo had deteriorated and that he had been taken to hospital by ambulance. Israeli authorities said they were checking the report.

Prisoners told Reuters their protest would be followed by other steps, including a call for a comprehensive commercial strike on Sunday.

"We are going to take difficult steps against the Palestinian leadership because it is not working seriously to guarantee our freedom," a prisoner said. "It is hard for us to work against our leadership but they are neglecting us."

Hundreds of Palestinians demonstrated in several West Bank cities on Tuesday demanding freedom for prisoners. In Jenin, women carried pictures of their jailed sons, many of whom are serving life sentences.

Baghdad maintains tough stance on weapons documents

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq maintained its tough stance Tuesday over U.N. arms experts' access to key weapons documents ahead of a U.N. Security Council meeting to prepare a response to the row.

Official Iraqi newspapers here described U.N. arms chief Richard Butler as "Satan" and accused him of wanting to provoke another crisis over U.N. weapons inspections to justify U.S. military strikes.

"This Satan is playing the role of the Security Council, by launching provocative threats and demanding non-existent documents," the Al Iraq daily said, calling for the sacking and "judging" of Butler.

The Al Qadisiya newspaper described Butler as the "Trojan horse" and said he was acting

to "poison the situation and justify an attack" on Iraq. Butler has issued a series of letters requesting documents containing specific data on Iraqi biological, chemical and ballistic disarmament files, demanding they be handed over "now."

In a letter to the Security Council, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz on Monday rejected Butler's demands for more documents but said Iraq was cooperating fully.

Aziz said Butler's requests for documents focused on files which no longer exist or were "a quest for attaining the impossible" and accused him of overstepping his mandate.

On the issue of a document U.N. weapons inspectors believe contains an inventory of Iraq's chemical weapons during its 1980-88 war with

Iran, Aziz said the inspectors would be able to consult "relevant portions."

But this would be in the presence of U.N. special envoy Prakash Shah, who on Tuesday said he had yet to arrange any meetings with the Iraqi authorities, but "there will be meetings later on."

Riyadh Al Qaisi, undersecretary at the foreign ministry, on Monday said the U.N. arms chief was trying to wipe out more than seven years of disarmament work and sabotage the proposed comprehensive review of sanctions imposed on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

In New York, the 15-member Security Council was due to discuss Aziz's letter to the council on Tuesday afternoon.

U.S. charge d'affaires Peter Burleigh said that his reading

of the Aziz letter showed that Iraq "still seems not to be responsive, and demonstrate the kind of cooperation we had hoped would be the case."

Britain and the United States have warned that they remain ready to strike Iraq militarily if Baghdad continues to defy the council, following an Iraqi decision on Nov. 14 to resume cooperation with the U.N. weapons inspectors.

Aziz accused the United States on Tuesday of wanting to subjugate Baghdad "through threats of destruction."

"Iraq is living a new period in its perpetual battle against the vile and the tyrants of the world, the United States and the Zionists and those who serve their interests to humiliate Iraq and subjugate it through threats of destruction."

Aziz said at a Baghdad poetry festival.

Despite the war of words, disarmament work continued on the ground with no obstruction from the Iraqis since the arms inspectors returned to work last week.

According to General Hosam Mohammad Amin, the Iraqi liaison to the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) for Iraqi disarmament, the experts carried out nine surprise inspections on Monday.

In other developments Tuesday, the Iraqi government carried out a sweeping diplomatic reshuffle, the largest since the 1991 Gulf war, and a mass funeral was held here for 31 children described as "victims of sanctions."

Among those replaced were Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations, Nizir

Hamdoun, and Barzan Tikriti, President Saddam Hussein's half-brother who was recalled as representative to the United Nations in Geneva in July.

Hamdoun's job will go to Said Al Moussawi, a diplomat accredited to the United Nations, an Iraqi official said.

At the Baghdad funeral, a procession of taxis drove coffins bearing the names and photos of the 31 dead children to the U.N. headquarters here, where a large crowd chanted anti-American slogans, witnesses said.

The funerals were held as the Security Council was due to vote Wednesday on extending for another six months the oil-for-food programme, under which Iraq is allowed to sell \$5.2 billion worth of oil every six months to buy humanitarian supplies.

Netanyahu tries to broaden government

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, hoping to prop up a rightist government shaken by his ceding of West Bank land, on Tuesday courted a former ally who quit in January accusing Netanyahu of going nowhere on peace.

A political source said Netanyahu could shorten a planned trip to Switzerland, Britain and Spain starting on Wednesday or send another cabinet minister in his place while trying to sew up a deal with former Foreign Minister David Levy.

Israeli media said Levy, who champions Israel's working-class poor, could be handed the job of national infrastructure minister, vacated by new Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, or Finance Minister Yaacov Neeman's job.

Confirming contacts with Levy in the wake of Israel's new land-for-security peace deal with the Palestinians, Netanyahu told reporters: "I hope that he, and perhaps others, will decide to go together with us on this path."

"We have an interest to widen the base of support for these important steps."

The 60-year-old leader of the five-member Geshet (Bridge) Party in parliament, Levy, quit the government in January over what he said was Netanyahu's failure to provide for low-income Israelis and the slow pace of peace moves.

At the time he likened Netanyahu's government to a "flight to nowhere." But on Tuesday, Levy, a white-haired veteran of Israeli politics, said he would respond to an offer from the 49-year-old Likud prime minister once he heard it.

Netanyahu has been facing political disarray since his own right-wing camp denied him majority support in a vote by Israel's parliament this month endorsing his deal with the Palestinians.

U.S. studies Israeli funds request

\$1.2 billion sought to finance West Bank redeployments

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States is studying Israeli requests for U.S. funds to bolster security following its decision to hand over West Bank territory to the Palestinians, the State Department said Monday.

Israeli Finance Minister Yacov Neeman presented an Israeli request for \$1.2 billion to help finance the Israeli military withdrawal from the West Bank, Israeli

Radio said.

The State Department did not give details on the Israeli proposal but said a working group had been formed to consider it. "We're evaluating their requests for assistance," said State Department spokesman James Rubin. U.S. Under Secretary for Economic Affairs Stuart Eizenstat and Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Martin

Indyk attended the meeting with the Israeli finance minister here Sunday. Israel is seeking U.S. help to offset the costs of the West Bank pullback, and the newspaper Haaretz said the Jewish state could receive an increase in the amount of annual military aid it receives from the United States. Under the Wye River land-for-security agreement signed last month, Israeli

troops are to withdraw in three phases from another 13 per cent of the West Bank. The first withdrawal took place on Friday. Israel is the top recipient of U.S. foreign aid, which totals some \$3 billion per year. The United States is also hosting on Nov. 30 a donors' conference to raise funds to spur economic development in the Palestinian territories.

NEWS IN BRIEF

42 hurt in Algerian bus bombing

ALGIERS (AFP) — A bomb blast injured 42 passengers aboard a bus south of the Algerian capital, while an armed extremist gang kidnapped 13 youths in a separate incident, press reports said Tuesday. The bus struck the explosive device on a road from Algiers southwards to Ghardaia on Monday, the daily El Watan reported. Among the 42 injured, two were seriously hurt in the blast at Oued Atteli in the Medea region, 70 kilometres from the capital. On Sunday, a gang of some 30 suspected Islamists attacked the hamlet of Bou-Smail in the Boumerdes region 50 kilometres east of Algiers, kidnapping 13 young men. Le Matin said.

Guerrillas wound five Israelis

MARIJAYOUN (AP) — Lebanese guerrillas fired rockets and mortars at outposts in Israeli-occupied southern Lebanon Monday, wounding three Israeli soldiers and two allied militiamen. The attacks provoked Israeli air and artillery retaliation. Three Lebanese civilians, including a seven-year-old boy, were wounded in retaliatory shelling, which targeted a string of villages facing the occupied zone, Lebanese security officials said. There were no immediate reports of casualties from the air raids. In Israel, the army said three of its soldiers were wounded, two seriously, in five separate attacks on Israeli and militia positions along the eastern sector of the zone.

Israeli on trial for Palestinian's murder

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli ultra-Orthodox Jew accused of murdering a Palestinian farmer in the West Bank last month has gone on trial in a Tel Aviv court. Gur Hamel, 28, is charged with beating to death Ahmad Hataba, 68, smashing his skull with a rock near the Jewish settlement of Itamar, southeast of Nablus in the northern West Bank. His trial opened Monday. According to the charges, Hamel was motivated only by racial hatred against the Palestinian who was harvesting olives. The alleged murderer was on the run for a week before giving himself up to the police. Israel's judicial system is often accused of being easy on settlers who kill Palestinians. A 17-year-old youth who murdered a 49-year-old Palestinian "for fun" in June near the West Bank town of Hebron was sentenced to just two years in prison last week.

'Egypt sentences Sudanese for spying'

KHARTOUM (R) — A Sudanese newspaper said on Tuesday Egypt had sentenced a number of Sudanese citizens to jail on spying charges after they were "kidnapped" by Egyptian authorities last month in the disputed Halaib border area on the Red Sea coast. "The kidnapped were tried by the Egyptian state security court on charges of spying for Sudan and the court passed harsh verdicts ranging from 15 years to 25 years in prison," the independent Al Usba newspaper said without giving a source. The report did not say when the sentences were passed or how many Sudanese were arrested. The newspaper said Foreign Affairs Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail would present a statement on the issue to Sudan's parliament this week. "The comprehensive statement would be on this incident and the circumstances and it would clarify the measures taken by the Sudanese government to face the behaviour of the Egyptian authorities," the daily said. The Sudanese government has made no statement on the incident so far. There was no Egyptian confirmation of the arrests.

Egypt, Ethiopia seek to coordinate Somali peace efforts

ADDIS ABABA (AFP) — Egypt and Ethiopia are determined to coordinate efforts to bring peace to Somalia, an Egyptian diplomat said on Tuesday during a visit to Addis Ababa by a team from Cairo.

The diplomat, who asked not to be named, said that the two countries — which had represented rival approaches to the strife in the Horn of Africa — had agreed to "coordinate efforts to solve peacefully the crisis in Somalia."

During talks following the arrival on Sunday of Egypt's Deputy Foreign Minister for African Affairs Ibrahim Hassan, the parties also held "general consultations with a view to finalising the problem of the Nile," the source added.

The use of Nile water resources is of major concern to the various east and north African countries through which the great river flows.

On Somalia, which has been without central government and divided among rival warlords since 1991, Ethiopia has been mandated by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to seek to resolve

the conflict. Egypt, for its part, managed to get rival Somali groups to sign an accord last December calling for a national reconciliation conference to be held. This has been repeatedly delayed, however.

In March, foreign ministers in the IGAD grouping — Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan, Uganda and Somalia (whose seat has been left empty) — denounced the multiplication of diplomatic initiatives regarding Somalia, implicitly accusing Egypt of thus stalling peace efforts.

Egypt has since joined a forum of IGAD partner nations and made clear that it would be prepared to join the regional organisation.

Ethiopian radio said that the visiting Egyptian team and their Ethiopian hosts also discussed the "national security interest" of both countries.

On Ethiopia's row with neighbouring Eritrea over demarcation of their border, which turned into a shooting war last May, the Egyptian source said Cairo backed an OAU peace initiative, which notably calls for the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from the disputed territory.



TURKISH POLICE AT ITALIAN CONSULATE: Turkish riot policemen Tuesday walk past a road construction near the Italian consulate in Istanbul. Police continue to keep strict security measures in the area, as Turks stage protests against the Italian government after a Rome court last week rejected a Turkish arrest warrant for Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan (Reuters photo)

Albright urges Iran's removal from drug list

WASHINGTON (R) — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, in a new move aimed at improving ties with Tehran, has recommended that President Bill Clinton remove Iran from the U.S. list of major illicit drug-producing countries, a senior U.S. official said Monday.

The official told Reuters a new U.S. survey has concluded that Iran has eradicated much of the country's illicit poppy cultivation and thus it "no longer meets the statutory justification" for inclusion on the U.S. list.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said it was hoped Iran would see the decision as evidence that the United States makes judgments on the basis of facts and "they are not based on some preordained desire to isolate Iran."

This was the latest gesture by Washington in a hesitant, slow-

moving diplomatic dance of improving relations between the two bitter enemies that began after a new moderate president, Mohammad Khatami, became Iran's president in 1997.

If Tehran better understands the "factual basis of our policies... hopefully this will put them in a better position to take action in other areas," such as stopping support for terrorism, the official said.

Iran has been on the U.S. list of major drug-producing and drug-transit countries since 1987 when Washington determined the amount of land cultivated with illicit poppies for opium use exceeded the U.S. statutory limit of 1,000 hectares.

According to the last U.S. survey of the Iranian poppy crop — which dates from 1993 — there was at least 3,500 hectares of land under illicit poppy cultivation in the country, officials

said. In recent years, however, Iran's government has reported success in halting illicit cultivation.

Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi, in a speech at the Asia Society in New York last September, decreed that his government is "on the front line of the global war on narcotic trafficking."

The U.S. official said in an interview that the United States was "unable to test these claims until this year, when a U.S. government survey of the country revealed no detectable poppy cultivation in traditional growing areas."

While acknowledging some cultivation in remote areas cannot be ruled out, he said U.S. experts have determined that "it is highly unlikely there would be enough to meet the threshold definition of a major drug producing country."

As a result, he said, "Secretary Albright has recommended to the president that Iran be removed from the list of major drug producing countries under the relevant sections of the Foreign Assistance Act because it no longer meets the statutory justification."

Iran would, however, remain designated as a "country of concern."

Officials said the U.S. survey did not involve U.S. experts actually visiting Iran, which has not had formal diplomatic ties with Washington since revolutionary Islamist students held 52 Americans hostage at the U.S. embassy in Tehran for 444 days in 1979-81.

Instead, the data that formed the basis of the decision came from satellites. United Nations employees in Iran and a "whole panoply of measures," which the official refused to specify.

NGO's group lending programme targets rural, underprivileged women

By Suha Ma'ayeh

AMMAN — A non-governmental organisation is relying on women to guarantee each other to benefit from a micro-lending programme that has so far helped improve the economic situation of nearly 16,000 women.

The Jordanian Women's Development Society, established in 1996 by Save the Children to carry out its pioneering Group Guaranteed Lending and Saving Programme, is targeting rural and underprivileged women with limited entrepreneurial skills and assets, officials said.

The programme also counts on the group to act as debt guarantors instead of the traditional collateral demanded by banks for loans.

"Women hardly have any access to capital, so we encourage them to form groups because our society does not require collateral," said Niveen Abboushi, executive director of the society. "But loans are given individually."

Underprivileged women seeking loans must be over 18 years of age, be part of a 10-member group and know their counterparts in the group. "Each woman guarantees the others,

so if any of them defaults the others have to pay for her," Abboushi told the Jordan Times in an interview.

The society disburses loans that range from JD75 to JD100 and that have an eight per cent annual interest rate.

Loans are paid on a bi-weekly basis over 18 weeks. After the group pays back the loan, they qualify for borrowing larger amounts.

"When you empower women, you improve the welfare of the whole family as women start spending money on their households and their children," Abboushi said. "The impact is much

greater." "We had women who started with a JD75 loan and bought a few cartons of tomatoes, vegetables and fruits. In the next cycle, she rented a small store and now she sells vegetables to all the neighbourhood and earns JD500 per month," she added.

Amal Halabi, who supervises lending in the Palestinian refugee camp of Baqa, said women in general are more careful in repaying their debts because they need to obtain new money to continue these projects.

She added that most women had shown creativity as they often changed

their micro-enterprises to suit the demands of their local communities. "We do not provide consulting services to women, because they are the best ones to determine what suits them in their communities," Abboushi added.

The society's area of operations include the governorates of Amman, Balqa, Irbid, Mafrqa, Zarqa, Ruseifa, Karak and Madaba.

It is funded by the United States Agency for International Development, UNICEF, Save the Children Private Funds, the Canada Fund and the Overseas Development Agency.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19
PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Cartoon — "The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin"
15:30 Children's Programme
Halfway to Cross the Galaxy and Turn Left
16:00 "French Documentary
16:30 "Masters of the Maze
17:00 "French programme
18:15 Drama — Wind at My Back
19:00 "Le Journal
19:15 "French programme
19:30 "News headlines
19:35 "Comedy — 2 Point 4 Children
20:00 Doc. — Envoye Special Magazine
20:30 Drama — NYPD Blue
21:10 The Great Moments of Science and Technology
21:30 "Faces and Places
22:00 "News in English
22:30 "Chicago Hope
23:10 "The Album Show
23:59 "End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:47Fajr
06:08Sunrise/Duha
11:22Dhuhr
14:13Asr
16:37Maghreb
17:58Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Sweilieh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366
Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811
St. Aftem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751
Amman International Church Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweilieh Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331
The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Skies will be partly cloudy with winds variable becoming southeasterly moderate. In Agaba, winds will be northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman12/25
Agaba17/30
Deserts11/26
Jordan Valley16/29

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 26, Agaba 31 Humidity readings: Amman 28 per cent, Agaba 32 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:
Ajloun12/19
Jerash19/26
Um Qays15/25
Madaba11/23
Petra10/24
Dead Sea21/32

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Bahjat Bader5332642
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim5350432
Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi4893542
Dr. Khalil Tushiq4757253

AMMAN:

Firas Pharmacy5661912
Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730
Mayadah Pharmacy 5337004
Rakib Al Dawa Pharmacy 5336169

IRBID:
Dr. Lutfi Shalabi(02)241798
Fou'ad Pharmacy(02)275360

ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Nabhan(09)3851743
Palestine Pharmacy(09)983562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Rescue Police 192 4621111 4637777
Fire Brigade4671701
Blood Bank4775121
Highway Police5343402
Traffic Office4896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints5605800
Price Complaints5661176
Waste & Sewage Complaints 4897467
Amman Municipality Complaints4787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls0132
Central Amman Telephone Repairs4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101
Jordan Television4773111
Radio Jordan4774111
Water Authority5680100

J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co.4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery5921199
The Islamic, Abdi5666131/7
Husseini Medical Centre 5856856
Luzulu4630195
Khaldi Maternity4644281/6
Akileh Maternity4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Malhas, J. Amman4636140
Palestine, Shmeisat5607071
Shmeisat Hospital5607431
Jordan Hospital5607550
University Hospital5353444
Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4771101/3
Al-Bashir4775111/26
Army, Marka4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital5157100
Amal Hospital5607155
Al Amal Cancer Centre 5353000

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital(09)883323
Zarqa National Hospital(09)900560
Jbn Sina Hospital(09)86731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital(09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital

.....(02)275555
Roman Catholic Hospital(02)272775
Jbn Al Nafees Hospital(02)7101372, (02)7103101
Reem Sisters Hospital(02)7102831, (02)7102011
Specialty Hospital(02)7103100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)2014111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:30Damascus (RJ)
08:35Jeddah (RJ)
08:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:55Larnaca (RJ)
15:00New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
15:50Madrid (RJ)
16:25London (RJ)

.....(02)275555
16:50Istanbul (RJ)
17:05Paris (RJ)
17:55 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
18:10Rome (RJ)
18:20Brussels, Berlin (RJ)
21:00Munich (RJ)
23:10Beirut (RJ)
23:59Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights
09:30Cairo (MS)
10:30Jeddah (SV)
12:20Kuwait (KU)
13:10Tunis (TU)
13:20Bahrain (GF)
14:05Rome (AZ)
15:05Vienna (OS)
15:30Algiers (AH)
18:05 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
18:40Beirut (ME)
19:15Frankfurt (LH)
00:55 London, Damascus (BA)
01:25Athens (OA)
02:00Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

09:30 Agaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
10:10 Agaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
16:00 Agaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
18:30 Haifa (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
18:45 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
22:50 Agaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

06:50Larnaca (RJ)
09:45Rome (RJ)
11:00Istanbul (RJ)
11:45Munich (add) (RJ)
12:15London (RJ)
19:30Colombo (RJ)
19:35Beirut (RJ)
20:00 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:15Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:15Bombay (RJ)
20:25Cairo (RJ)
20:35New Delhi (RJ)
21:00Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
21:15Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:45Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights

06:30Larnaca (CY)
07:25 Damascus, London (BA)
07:25Paris (AF)
10:30Cairo (MS)
12:00Medina, Jeddah (SV)
13:20Kuwait (KU)
14:10Bahrain (GF)
14:10Tunis (TU)
15:30Vienna (OS)
15:30Rome (AZ)
16:20Sharjah (AH)
19:30 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
00:35Amsterdam (KL)
02:45Athens (OA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

07:00 Agaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
08:30 Agaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
16:00 Haifa (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
16:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)
20:30 Agaba (from QAIA) (RW)

Father murders 17-year-old daughter for family 'honour'

18 women killed for 'honour' this year

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — A 42-year-old man who reportedly confessed to murdering his divorced daughter Tuesday in the name of family honour is in police custody, official sources said.

The incident occurred in Ghamadan National Park, near Queen Alia International Airport Road, the sources said.

According to the source, the victim, L.F.Z., 17, was run away with a man after "telling her family that she loved him."

The source also said the young woman had been married before and was divorced.

The couple were taken into custody by police on Monday, and the man was detained on charges of raping a minor while the woman was transferred to the governor, the source added.

In most cases that reach the authorities in which a woman is suspected of or is involved in "immoral" behaviour, the woman is handed over to the governor, who in turn refers her to a corrective centre for her protection.

On Tuesday morning, the source said, the daughter was released into the custody of

her father after he signed a guarantee that he would not harm her. He then took her to the park and slit her throat.

The father surrendered to police shortly after committing the crime, sources said.

L.F.Z. became the eighteenth woman reportedly killed in Jordan this year for alleged "immoral behaviour."

Police detain suspect in murder

Also Tuesday, police apprehended an 18-year-old youth suspected of stabbing to death a 23-year-old man in Hashmi Shamali on Monday, according to official sources.

The suspect reportedly confessed to murdering Loui Ahmad "to cleanse his honour" because the victim told him that he was in love with his sister, the source said.

The source added that the suspect told police that he lured the victim to a deserted area on the pretence that he was taking him to see his sister and stabbed him.

Coroners said that the victim, who was found dead in the Qastal suburb, was stabbed 29 times in the chest and back.



PRINCESS BASMA ATTENDS CELEBRATION FOR KING'S BIRTHDAY: HRH Princess Basma on Tuesday attended a celebration at Um Al Hussein Orphanage to mark His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday. Princess Basma inaugurated the orphanage's library, which includes 1,750 books on various subjects. The celebration included religious and traditional folk songs, as well as poems. While at the orphanage, Princess Basma met with Chinese Ambassador to Jordan Liu Baolai, who donated computers, furniture and electrical equipment to the orphanage (Petra photo)

Man confesses to lashing wife 100 times for her 'disobedience'

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — A man accused of lashing his 29-year-old wife over 100 times with an electrical cord has told the Court of First Instance that he abused her because she "disobeyed" him, the victim's lawyer said Tuesday.

Defence lawyer Noor Imam said her client, who maintained that she was frequently abused by her husband, was seeking financial compensation for the three-hour-long lashing late last month.

Imam is expected to submit her evidence during the next session, slated for Dec. 5.

"During the first court session, the husband confessed to lashing his wife for three hours because she disobeyed him," Imam told the Jordan Times.

"The husband lashed her for three consecutive hours after she refused to switch on the radio after midnight at his request because she wanted to sleep," she added.

Imam said the 38-year-old husband was in police custody, while the victim had gone back to her house to

look after her four children.

Imam, a member of the Jordanian Women's Union and several human rights groups, said she filed the case after the mother of four approached the union on Oct. 23 for help.

"The victim's body was covered with all sorts of bruises," she said. The union sent her to see the lawyer after offering her some initial help.

Imam said she decided to take up the case for free "because this woman is one of few who had enough courage to press charges against her husband."

"This woman informed me that she had often been assaulted by her husband, who would usually tie her up before beating her with sticks and 'electrical cords,' or stomping on her stomach and kicking her around," she added.

"Further aggravating her situation is the fact that her family lives in the West Bank and her two brothers refuse to help her," said Imam.

She said Minister of Social Development Mohammad Khair Mamsar, after hearing

of her plight, ordered the National Aid Fund to immediately offer her JD100.

"But a new problem will arise when the case is over and her husband is released, as this woman neither has a guardian or a place to go to," she said.

The government is currently working on a project to establish a women's shelter to help female victims of domestic violence or those whose lives are in danger because they are threatened with being killed by their families for honour reasons.

Imam is one of many lawyers who help women who use the union's hotline, which has received over 1,500 complaints from victims of domestic violence since it began operations in March 1998.

The hotline advises callers "how to take legal action against abusers."

"But what is unfortunate is that most of these women refrain from pursuing their case either because they fear their husbands and society or because they are financially dependent on their husbands," Imam said.

Government, House committee discuss pipelines deal Further action delayed pending results of investigation into sale

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — The government and the Lower House Energy and Agriculture Committee agreed Tuesday to wait for the completion of an investigation into the Iraqi Petroleum Company pipelines, expected by next week, before pursuing further action on the sale of parts of the pipeline.

During their meeting at Parliament, attended by Minister of Water and Energy Hani Mulki, Minister of Telecommunications Suleiman Hafez (who oversaw the July sale of parts of the pipeline running through Jordan in his capacity as then finance minister), Minister of State Samir Bino, other senior officials and around 20 deputies, the two sides discussed at length the pipelines case after halting the JD250,000 deal.

"We decided to give the government a week to complete the investigations," Deputy Salameh Hani told the Jordan Times.

However, the state-run Petra news agency reported that "Mulki presented a detailed briefing about the violations of the supply law committed by a non-authorised party in selling the pipelines."

Mulki also briefed the

deputies about the government's measures to deal with the violations.

The deputies asked the officials several related questions as part of its follow-up efforts, Hani said.

He also said the committee presented the government with some recommendations built on the committee's opinion regarding the pipelines case.

The government decided Saturday to halt all procedures related to the sale of the Iraqi Petroleum Company pipelines pending the completion of investigations into the legality of the bid and studies of possible uses of the pipelines.

On Sunday, Mulki formed four committees to examine the pipes' present condition: two independent field technical committees, and another two responsible for assessing the technical and administrative side of the case.

The assessment is expected to be concluded today.

"The technical and administrative assessment committees are supposed to meet on Wednesday," Mulki told the Jordan Times on Sunday.

However, he said he expected the completion of the investigation into the pipelines case by next week.

The government stopped

dismissing the pipelines and decided to store all sections of the pipeline that had been removed at the Aqaba Region Authority pending the completion of investigations into the legality of the bid.

Mulki sent a legal memorandum on Sunday to Alram Amin Abu Amr, who won the bid on July 20, 1998, telling him to stop work immediately as he was violating the deal by taking parts of another pipeline that were not included in the official bid.

But Abu Amr himself claimed in a letter sent to the head of the Jordan Water Authority, dated Aug. 10, that several pipeline components listed in the official bid were not found due to the fact that no maps were available.

The pipeline, linking Iraq's northern region with the Mediterranean city of Haifa via Jordan, was totally shut down after the 1948 war that led to Israel's creation.

It was initially built by a British company in the early 1930s for the Iraqi Petroleum Company.

In a minor Jordanian-Iraqi border demarcation in the early 1980s, Amman was eventually given additional parts of the pipeline which passed through the new areas.

Tarawneh, U.S. senator hold talks on peace process, bilateral ties

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh held talks

Tuesday with visiting U.S. Senator Sam Brownback on the Middle East peace process and U.S.-Jordanian relations.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Brownback, who arrived Monday in Amman on a two-day visit to Jordan, told reporters after the meeting that the U.S. highly appreciates His Majesty King Hussein's efforts towards a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

Brownback referred to the

King's contribution to the peace process, noting that his efforts resulted in the Israeli-Palestinian agreement signed at the White House concerning the redeployment of Israeli forces in the occupied Arab territories.

Also Tuesday, Tarawneh conferred with the president and board members of the Jordan Writers Union about the country's cultural movement and the union's plans.

Hani Khair, the union's president, said discussion focused in particular on the question of

transferring ownership of a piece of state-owned land from the government to the union.

Khair said that the prime minister expressed the government's keenness on providing support for the union, adding that he had submitted a memorandum to Tarawneh concerning the union's demands and needs.

The government last year announced that it would grant the union 91 dunams of land in the Shafa Badran district, northwest of Amman, for its projects.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Princess Sumaya attends celebration

AMMAN (Petra) — To mark His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday, HRH Princess Sumaya on Tuesday attended a special celebration at Princess Sumaya University College for Technology. She presented certificates to excellent students.

Syria releases detained Jordanian

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Syrian authorities have released Jordanian citizen Mousa Karasneh, an employee of the Municipal and Village Development Bank, an official at the Foreign Ministry said Tuesday. Karasneh was released by Syria on Nov. 18, he said. The official added that Karasneh, who is now in Jordan, had travelled to Syria on June 15, 1998 for a holiday, but was detained by the Syrian authorities. Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Sharara had earlier claimed that no Jordanian officials were detained in Syria. Information Minister Nasser Judeh last month said Karasneh went missing after he entered Syrian for a private visit. According to Judeh, about 190 Jordanians are believed to be held in Syria.

'Foreign investment reaches JD459m'

AQABA (Petra) — Foreign investment in Jordan since the beginning of this year has reached JD459 million and is expected to rise to JD500 million by the end of December, an official said Tuesday. Munaser Oklah, director general of the Investment Promotion Corporation, said 184 new projects investing capital estimated at JD379.2 million were entitled to benefit from tax exemptions in accordance with the corporation's law. Oklah said in a lecture delivered at Aqaba. He added that projects entitled to benefit from the law are those involving agriculture, industry, hotels, hospitals, maritime transport and railways. The corporation is currently preparing an investors guidebook that will provide information on areas for investment and is planning to establish a databank as well, added Oklah.

Jordan-Italy meeting opens Thursday

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian-Italian investment symposium will be held in Florence, Italy on Nov. 26 and 27, according to Talal Shahin, head of Jordan's trade delegation in Italy. Shahin said Jordanian and Italian businesspersons representing more than 50 industrial firms in both countries will be taking part in the symposium. Discussion will cover means of transferring Italian technology to Jordan to enhance the capacity of the Kingdom's industry.

Minister meets with Australian envoy

AMMAN (Petra) — Agriculture Minister Mijhem Khreisha on Tuesday held talks with Australian Ambassador to Jordan Ian William Russell on bilateral cooperation in agricultural and technical fields. Khreisha stressed the importance of enhancing commercial, industrial and agricultural cooperation for the benefit of both countries.

AMMAN (J.T.) — A prominent Jordanian chief editor yesterday proposed higher ethical standards for the media as a way of overcoming or discouraging restrictive press legislation. During a roundtable discussion yesterday on "Culture and Communication: A Global Information Society," Nahil Sherif, chief editor of Al Dustour Arabic daily, recited a list of failed attempts on behalf of the newspaper industry to enforce ethical standards in its ranks. These failures, he said, have been accompanied by at least five changes in the Kingdom's press and publications laws since 1939 that have fluctuated in their protection of press freedoms.

In 1967, for example, the law prohibited the arrest of journalists pending trial, while neither the 1993 nor

the new 1998 Press and Publication Law grant journalists this protection. Jordan's first press legislation enacted following the lifting of martial law did not permit the "suspension" of newspapers by a court order, although this was a new prerogative granted in the 1998 law.

"But regulating the press by focusing on whether or not our press laws are liberal or restrictive will never fulfil the task of advancing the cause of press freedoms in Jordan," Sherif said.

"Self-regulation through the adoption of codes of ethics and independent press councils is an option worth considering to solve the dilemma of upholding press freedoms without infringing on the rights of others," he argued. "If this option is deemed viable and succeeds, journalists will

be better positioned to lobby for the amendment of the current highly restrictive 1998 press law."

The culture and communications conference is being hosted by the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy in cooperation with the MacBride Roundtable and the Med-Media Jemstone Network under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent. The meeting, which ends today, brings together leading communication specialists from around the world who are presenting papers on four themes. The roundtable is sponsored by Royal Jordanian, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Al Dustour. The Friedrich Naumann Foundation and Jordan Radio and Television Corporation are also lending their support to the roundtable.

Attempts to consider self-regulation as an option for the Jordanian press, he said, have been as vague and inconsistent as the nation's various press laws. Some information ministers drafted codes of ethics for journalists, while others proposed the formation of the press council to act as an arbiter between citizens and newspapers.

Previous laws of the Jordan Press Association referred to non-binding legislation of the Arab Journalists Union that talks about a code of ethics. Most recently, a Royal Commission on the press was proposed for the formation of another press council, but this has yet to materialise. Only the JPA law adopted in August has addressed the issue of professional standards within a legal framework, a situation that may have

allowed the government to override the press' self-regulatory role.

"It is so secret that prior to the introduction of the 1997 temporary amendments, senior Jordanian officials asked journalists... to put an end to the excesses of some weekly tabloids," Sherif said. "A timetable was set by both journalists and officials to allow journalists to regulate their profession, but journalists never met this deadline and the government went ahead with the introduction of the current law."

Barbara Thomass, from the University of Hamburg, asserted that the press is responsible to the public and that ethical standards have to be considered at six different levels, the most basic being individual morality, followed by professional or newsroom

ethics, media enterprise ethics, media politics, political culture and metaethics.

"Ethical standards can only develop if all these levels are working together and contribute their possibilities for a better media performance," Thomass said. "The media's credibility is also dependent on the degree to which they allow transparency concerning their own performance."

The professor postulated that self-regulation promotes more effective and more positive action within the industry itself, but a better image and adequate self-regulation require media monitoring functions, evaluation and critics, education of media professionals and feedback in a systematic and organised way.

The roundtable will conclude this afternoon.

what's going on

FILMS

* Spanish film "Bohemios" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabbal Amman on Thursday Nov. 26 at 5:00 p.m.

* German film "Der Tönnacher" (with subtitles in English) at Goethe-Institut, Jabbal Amman at 7:00 p.m.

* "Meeting and dialogue with Berlin-based Syrian artist Marwan Kassab Bashi" at Darat Al Funun, Jabbal Weibdeh on Thursday Nov. 26 at 5:30 p.m.

CONCERT

* Arabic music "Al Takht Al Sharqi" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabbal Weibdeh at 8:30 p.m.

PLAY

* "Kind Chemo" (in Arabic) at Hassan Ibn Talal Auditorium, University of Jordan at 7:00 p.m. (daily until Nov. 29).

DISCUSSION

* A discussion group dealing with "Society as a Scapagoat" at Books@Cafe, Jabbal Amman on Friday November 27 at 3:30 p.m. (Tel. 5661717).

EXHIBITIONS

* The Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists at Darat Al Funun, Jabbal Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2, until Jan. 28).

* Paintings by Farouq Hassan at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Uthaina (Tel. 5526932), until Nov. 29.

* Photography exhibition entitled "Windows and Doors" by Hani Hourani at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Dec. 18.

* Display of Jordan River Foundation (JRF) 1998 autumn/winter collection entitled "Falling Leaves" at the JRF showroom, Jabbal Amman (Tel. 4613081), until Nov. 30.

* Crossroads of Civilisations: More Than 100 Years of German Archaeological Activities in Jordan" (sponsored by the German Protestant Institute in cooperation with Petra Store Preservation) at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Nov. 28.

* Paintings by Jordanian artist Mohammad Abu Aziz at the French Cultural Centre, Jabbal Amman, until Nov. 28.

Illegal water users begin legalising situation following Water Authority's warning of legal action

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — Dozens of citizens who had been illegally receiving water by tampering with or damaging water metres Tuesday rushed to legalise their situation after the Water Authority warned that it would crack down on such abuse.

The head of the WA's Subscribers Department, Kamal Zou'bi, said citizens in every governorate who had obtained water illegally or linked their houses to the sewage system without permission initiated procedures to rectify their status.

"The WA will stop supplying water to violators, who will later be sued and charged before the prosecutor general after we determine the amount of water they have illegally used," Zou'bi told the Jordan Times.

He added that the authority will not resume services to violators again without the consent of Water Minister Hani Mulki.

But Zou'bi said violators who settle their situation before the end of the month would be allowed to pay their accounts under an instalment system.

Mulki has said unaccounted water losses are due in large part to illegal tampering with water metres, which he estimated as the cause behind more than 25 per cent of overall water losses.

The government has said it was

working to replace all broken water networks in order to lower the estimated 55 per cent loss rate and prevent "irresponsible and illegal" water use, which reportedly costs the country around JD15 million a year.

According to Mulki, the ministry spent JD11 million to repair Irbid governorate's water network in order to contain leakage estimated at 58 per cent of the total supply. But water losses dropped by only 11 per cent, which, he said, meant that 47 per cent was still used illegally.

Several government studies will be conducted throughout the Kingdom to determine the extent of water losses, and more laws will be

enacted to stop illegal use, the government has said.

According to some studies cited in recent news reports, in 1995 the ministry pumped 50,220 million cubic metres of water to Amman, but 28,011 million cubic metres were lost.

A survey conducted recently among 184 citizens in the Tabarbour area of Amman revealed that 50 per cent of the residents were using water supplies illegally, either by breaking or tampering with metres.

Another study said water metre readings are sometimes less than 38 per cent of the actual amount of water consumed by citizens.

Queen sets stage for British constitutional battle

LONDON (R) — Queen Elizabeth set the stage for an epic British constitutional battle Tuesday when she announced government plans to end the centuries-old right of hereditary aristocrats to sit in the upper House of Lords.

In a speech opening a new session of parliament, written for her by her Labour ministers, the queen said the government planned to start "a process of reform to make the House of Lords more democratic and representative."

As a first step, she told the lords, resplendent in their ermine-trimmed red robes, a bill would be introduced to strip the 759 hereditary peers, some with titles dating back to the Middle Ages, of their right to sit and vote in the upper House of Parliament.

The queen also announced government plans to push 21 other bills through parliament, including ones on bread-and-butter political issues such as the National Health Service, food safety, youth justice, trade union rights and welfare benefits.

But the fate of some of these bills could come into question if the hereditary peers, almost half of them members of the opposition

Conservative Party, resist government plans for reform of the upper chamber.

The government has already had a taste of how disruptive the Lords can be. At the end of the last session of parliament last week, it was forced to abandon a bill to change the system by which British members of the European Parliament are elected.

The queen announced that the bill, for a switch to proportional representation (PR), which was amended on five occasions by the Lords, will be reintroduced in the new session.

But ministers said that unless the Lords accepted the government's proposed PR system this time without delay, it would become law too late for the June elections to the Strasbourg assembly.

The Conservatives show no sign of planning to receive the European Elections Bill more favourably a second time round, and are digging in for a parliamentary time-consuming resistance to the abolition of the hereditary peers.

They say they are not opposed to the move in principle, but that it would leave the Lords as largely a collection of people made

life peers by successive prime ministers, and therefore unlikely to show an independent spirit.

The Conservatives want the government first to spell out in detail their plans for the final shape of a revised second chamber of parliament.

The bills contained in the Queen's speech came as little surprise to political observers.

But they said plans for welfare reform were bound to provide the government with a rocky ride in the House of Commons despite its 179 seat majority.

Left-wing Labour MPs fear that the changes will force people into work, and will cut some benefits.

There is also unease among Prime Minister Tony Blair's parliamentary colleagues that ministers have not found legislative room for a Freedom of Information Bill, which Labour promised in its 1997 election manifesto.

However, government plans for a new Food Standards Agency, following a series of health scares, for new tax credits for working families and disabled people, and for moves to help trade unions with negotiating rights with employers are likely to enthrone Blair loyalists.



The queen leaves Buckingham Palace by carriage for the House of Commons to attend the State Opening of Parliament. In her traditional speech the queen read out a bill that will sound the death knell for hundreds of hereditary peers by taking away their right to sit and vote in the Upper House of parliament (Reuters photo)

Japan and China meet over wartime apology

TOKYO (AFP) — Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan held sensitive talks Tuesday reportedly demanding a strong Japanese wartime apology at a landmark Tokyo summit this week, officials and reports said.

Tang held secretive negotiations with his Japanese counterpart Masahiko Komura, officials said, just a day ahead of an historic visit here by President Jiang Zemin.

Chinese and Japanese officials refused to divulge any details of the hastily arranged talks ahead of Thursday's summit between Jiang and Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi.

"We cannot make any comment," said one Japanese foreign ministry official, adding that further meetings were to be held but he could not say at what level.

Reports here said Tang and Komura aimed to break through a last-minute deadlock on the proposed Japanese apology, due to be included in a joint declaration to be signed immediately after the leaders' summit.

"We cannot face the future unless we acknowledge history," Tang told 1,200 Chinese students Monday, according to the China Daily, adding that Jiang's Nov. 25-30 trip was of "far-reaching historic significance."

Komura told a news conference here ahead of the meeting with Tang that he aimed to make "the final preparation for the president's visit."

Asked what they would discuss, he replied: "I am not going to tell you that."

The Asahi newspaper said a senior Japanese foreign ministry official met with China's assistant foreign minister, Wang Yi, Monday but could not agree on the wording of the Japanese apology.

"The two men failed to agree on how the joint communiqué will refer to Japan's aggression in China before and during World War II. The issue was carried over to a meeting being held today" by the foreign ministers, the report said.

According to the Yomiuri newspaper, Jiang could not back down on the apology without losing support at home but Japan was refusing to go further than earlier expressions of regret.

China claims 20 million citizens died as a result of the 1937-45 war with Japan's Imperial Army. The notorious 1937 Nanjing massacre killed 140,000 people, according to Allied trials of Japanese war criminals.

Tokyo plans to erect a security cordon of 10,000 police to protect Jiang from Japanese rightist protesters expected to denounce any wartime apology.

"We have started boosting security," a spokesman for the Tokyo Police Department said. "In particular we are closely monitoring moves by rightist groups," he said.

Beijing had also failed to persuade Tokyo to strengthen isolation of Taiwan, the Asahi said, and the joint commu-

iqué would simply "emphasize that Japan-Taiwan relations are not at government-to-government level."

The new statement would reaffirm a 1972 joint communiqué which says Japan understands and respects China's position on Taiwan, regarded by Beijing as a renegade province, it said.

China was reportedly pressing for Japan to stipulate in the communiqué a "Three Nos" policy — no Taiwan independence, no two Chinas and no to Taiwan joining international organisations as a sovereign nation.

The Yomiuri newspaper said China now expected an oral pledge for Japan to refrain from supporting Taiwanese independence.

Jiang's trip is to be the first full official visit to Japan by a Chinese president, although he did come before in a less formal capacity to attend an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Osaka in 1995.

According to press reports here the highlight of the visit will be a joint declaration on a partnership for peace and development.

The declaration will also incorporate such issues as nuclear non-proliferation, the environment and the Asian economic crisis.

One report said Japan would extend 390 billion yen (\$3.2 billion) as the remaining portion of an agreed official development aid loan to China, including flood assistance.

Yeltsin still in hospital, recovering from pneumonia

MOSCOW (AP) — Sidelined yet again by illness, President Boris Yeltsin is resting in a hospital where he is likely to stay for at least a week while he recovers from pneumonia, aides said Tuesday.

Presidential spokesman Dmitry Yakushkin said the president's condition was stable and his temperature was normal.

Yeltsin played host to Chinese President Jiang Zemin in a hospital reception room Monday. Aides said the president would likely cancel other meetings with foreign visitors this month but will meet Russian officials at the hospital.

Yeltsin, 67, was suddenly hospitalized with what the Kremlin called pneumonia and a high temperature Sunday, his third ailment in recent weeks, reviving worries about his ability to run a vast country deep in economic crisis.

Yeltsin has insisted

repeatedly that he will serve out his term, which ends in the year 2000. Under the Russian constitution, the prime minister takes over for three months if the president dies or is incapacitated.

Yeltsin's condition "hasn't worsened, but it hasn't improved either," and he still has a slight temperature, presidential spokesman Dmitry Yakushkin said on Russia's NTV television Monday night.

In television footage of his meeting with Jiang, Yeltsin was chuckling and wearing a sweater and did not look very ill.

The Russian president has rarely been seen in public recently, and the Kremlin has only allowed limited television coverage of him, fuelling speculation that he is seriously sick.

He fell ill twice in October. Doctors described the first as a respiratory ailment and the second as high blood pres-

sure and exhaustion. Since then, the Kremlin appears to have been taking little chance with the president's health, ensuring that he has frequent medical checks and keeping his schedule to a minimum.

"His doctors were not delighted that he decided to meet Jiang," Yakushkin said.

He wouldn't say how long Yeltsin would stay in the hospital.

He said treatment for pneumonia usually takes 8-10 days.

Yeltsin aide Sergei Prikhodko, in an interview on NTV, added: "Knowing the president's character, he will have his own point of view on how long he has to stay in the hospital."

Opposition leaders and a growing number of centrist politicians have questioned whether Yeltsin can fulfill his duties and speculation has grown about early elections.

Sri Lankans face deportation from Australia

CANBERRA (R) — Almost 160 Sri Lankans face deportation from Australia after losing a court appeal Tuesday against a government policy preventing them from upgrading their temporary humanitarian visas to permanent residence.

The Sri Lankans, who said they feared persecution if they returned to their war-torn island home, have three weeks to appeal to the High Court of Australia before they are deported.

"We don't generally remove people within that appeal period," a spokesman for the immigration minister told Reuters Tuesday.

The Sri Lankans are a mix of Sinhalese and Tamils.

Since 1990 Australia has granted temporary humanitarian visas to people worried about returning to their home country.

But this ended last year when it introduced new visas for people from Sri Lanka, Kuwait, Lebanon, Iraq, China and the former Yugoslavia.

The new visas allowed people from these countries to apply to upgrade their temporary visas to permanent residence if they arrived in Australia before Nov. 1, 1993.

The Sri Lankans arrived after that date.

The Sri Lankans argued the 1993 cut-off date discriminated against them in breach of Australia's Racial Discrimination Act.

"Some of our clients missed out on that visa by a matter of days," Karyn Anderson, the Sri Lankans' lawyer, told reporters.

She said they faced persecution if they returned to Sri Lanka but did not say what kind of persecution awaited them.

The Federal Court in Melbourne Thursday rejected their appeal, saying the government's action was not unreasonable.

Local media reported that the total number of Sri Lankans that might be forced to leave Australia was 450 if the families of the 160-odd Sri Lankans were counted.

In the past Sri Lankans who were deported have been questioned by Sri Lankan police but no action has been taken against them.

Saturday, 58 Sri Lankans attempting to illegally immigrate to Australia were held for questioning by Sri Lankan police after their boat sank less than two weeks into their voyage.

Sri Lanka has been racked by a separatist rebellion by Tamil guerrillas in the island's north and east since 1983.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Congo's Kabila meets Pope John Paul II

VATICAN CITY (AFP) — Pope John Paul II received President Laurent Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for a private audience Tuesday, Vatican sources said. The sources gave no details of the meeting, which began at 10:30 a.m. (0930 GMT), and was described as short. The encounter had been presented as one of the highlights of a visit to Italy by Kabila at the start of a European tour to drum up support for his Kinshasa regime, faced with an uprising in the east of the country. The meeting with the Roman Catholic Pontiff arose from an invitation from the San Egidio community, a church organisation which played key roles in helping to mediate settlements to conflicts such as Mozambique's civil war. Kabila has refused to negotiate with the Tutsi-led rebels who began an uprising in the eastern DRC on Aug. 2, but said he will talk to their Ugandan and Rwandan allies, whom he accuses of invading the country. His own regime is backed by Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia and Chad. Later Tuesday, Kabila was scheduled to meet President Luigi Scalfaro. He flew into Rome Sunday evening and has been to the foreign ministry and met DRC nationals living in Italy. The DRC president was due to leave for Belgium, the former colonial power in the former Zaire, Tuesday night. He will attend this year's Franco-African summit, to take place in Paris on Nov. 28.

Berisha calls for new protest against referendum

TIRANA (AFP) — Albanian opposition leader Sali Berisha called on his supporters to stage a new protest Tuesday against "government manipulation" of the results of a referendum on the constitution. Berisha, head of the Democratic Party (DP), called on protesters to rally at 4 p.m. (1500 GMT) in Skanderbeg square in central Tirana. Monday 2,000 of the former Albanian president's supporters demonstrated in Tirana, shouting "Down with Communism." Berisha had urged voters to boycott the referendum on a new constitution, the first since the 1990 collapse of the former Communist regime. He accused the socialist-led government of electoral fraud and manipulating the outcome. According to unofficial results given out by presidential spokesman Pirc Zogaj, more than 55 per cent of Albanians who cast ballots in the referendum voted "yes". But Berisha said his own party's estimates were that turnout was only 39.6 per cent, which meant the referendum had been rejected by Albanians. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, whose monitors observed the vote, said the referendum was held in "calm and normal manner."

Death toll mounts as Europe freezes

BUCHAREST (AFP) — Some 60 people have died from extreme cold in Romania in the past few days, police said Tuesday after a further 24 deaths were reported overnight. Romania has so far been worst-hit by the current cold spell, which has left more than 100 people dead across Europe suddenly in the grip of freezing weather. The new deaths, including homeless people who died of hypothermia and the victims of accidents on ice- and snow-bound roads, were reported mainly in the east of the country, police said. The Romanian army was called in to rescue more than 1,700 cars buried in snow in recent days in the south and the east. The death toll from the cold in neighbouring Bulgaria meanwhile rose to four Tuesday, after the body of a man was found overnight. Hundreds of ice- and snow-related accidents have also been reported and villages were left without electricity across the northeast and south of the country, the authorities said. Record cold temperatures for November have been recorded in several areas across Europe, taking those most at risk — street-sweepers, the sick and the elderly — by surprise. In Poland temperatures have fallen as low as minus 26 degrees Celsius, leaving at least 36 people dead.

Six police killed in Kashmir bomb blast

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Six Indian policemen were killed Tuesday in a powerful bomb blast in the northern Himalayan state of Kashmir, the United News of India (UNI) reported. The explosion occurred in Anantnag district and the dead men belonged to the Special Operation Group (SOG) of the Kashmir police, UNI said. No further details were available. Around 20,000 people have died in a Muslim separatist campaign raging in Kashmir since 1989. India accuses Pakistan of arming and training the Muslim militants. Islamabad denies the charge.

Gates donating \$20 million to Seattle Public Library

SEATTLE (AP) — Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates and his wife, Melinda, are donating \$20 million to the Seattle Public Library just three weeks after voters approved an ambitious makeover of the library system. About \$15 million of Monday's pledge will help expand and improve neighbourhood libraries. \$4 million will beef up book collections, and \$1 million will support literacy and English language programmes. "Melinda and I are supporting the Seattle Public Library because we hope children from across the city will get the same chance that we did to succeed through reading and exploring new ideas," Bill Gates said in a statement. A check of American Library Association records indicates the donation is the largest single gift ever made to a public library system, said Rose Berg-Fosnaugh, a Gates publicist. The Gateses said they were inspired in part by the recent election. Seattle voters approved a \$196.4 million bond measure to expand and refurbish the library system. In September, Forbes Magazine estimated Gates' assets at \$58.4 billion, making him the richest person in the United States.

James Joyce fans lamenting demolition of significant house

DUBLIN, Ireland (AP) — Fans of James Joyce are fuming about the razing of a house once home to the Irish writer's family that figured prominently in his novel "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man." A passage in the book vividly describes the hero Stephen Dedalus returning to 2 Millbourne Ave. — one of 17 Dublin houses Joyce lived in — to find his family finishing a meagre meal that included "the last of the second watered tea." The company developing the site, MX Systems, said the house was demolished because it posed a danger to children playing in the area. But Dublin city officials maintained that planning permission for the site did not permit the destruction of houses. Patrick O'Rourke, the head of MX Systems, said he had not been aware Joyce had lived in the house. "The roof had collapsed in 1996, and the walls were cracked," O'Rourke said. "It was very dangerous." Ken Monaghan, one of Joyce's nephews, said he was "very, very sad" to see the house go. "It would not be possible to keep every home the Joyces lived in, because they led a very nomadic existence," Monaghan said. "But this house has very strong resonances. The whole scene in 'Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man' is very poignant."

Blindfolded Indian magician tells voters to open their eyes

NEW DELHI (AFP) — An Indian magician staged a blindfold motorcycle stunt in New Delhi Tuesday, in a bizarre bid to persuade voters to go into key state elections with their eyes open.

"I am asking the voters not to cast their vote blindfolded," magician Madan Kundu told reporters.

"In a democracy a vote is the most important instrument for change. They have to take it seriously," said Kundu, who has per-

formed more than 3,000 shows nationwide.

Crucial local elections are to be held Wednesday for a total of 630 seats in New Delhi city and the states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Mizoram.

Kundu's stunt involved donning a beaded blindfold and riding a motorcycle in a dead straight three-kilometre line from the historic India Gate in the heart of the capital to the Presidential Palace.

The motorcycle was followed by a dozen cars decked out with posters encouraging voters to cast their ballots Wednesday.

"More and more voters are not casting their vote. They prefer to stay at home since it is a holiday," said the 45-year-old magician.

"I am saddened by the present state of politics. Even we magicians cannot make out where the money siphoned off by politicians in various scandals has vanished to."



Indonesian students hold up posters reading: 'Bring former President Suharto to trial' during a protest outside the attorney general's office in Jakarta. Groups of students took to the streets Tuesday demanding faster democratic reform and a tough probe into ousted President Suharto's wealth (Reuters photo)

Indonesian students take to the streets

JAKARTA (R) — Small groups of students took to Jakarta's streets Tuesday demanding faster democratic reform and a tough probe into the wealth of ousted President Suharto.

The protests were peaceful, in contrast to civil unrest this month in Indonesia that has so far killed about 30 people.

The students received powerful support Tuesday when a senior member of the armed forces (ABRI) for the first time publicly backed a probe into Suharto's wealth.

"The government must be bold on the investigation of former President Suharto's wealth," the regional Jawa Pos newspaper quoted Lieutenant-General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as saying.

Yudhoyono heads the territorial forces and is one of ABRI's most senior officers.

Some newspapers estimated Suharto and his family amassed \$40 billion during his autocratic 32-year rule of the world's fourth most populous nation.

By the time the now 77-year-old leader handed over to his hand-picked successor, B.J. Habibie, in May amid bloody riots and a worsening economic crisis, almost all major business projects involved a member of the first family.

Students gathered at the attorney-general's office, the main road through central Jakarta and along the road leading past parliament, demanding more democratic reforms and Suharto's punishment for

abuses during his reign.

"Hang Suharto and his family," read one banner. Almost 1,000 students marched along the capital's main road towards the presidential palace. They dispersed after a line of troops in riot gear stopped them getting close to the palace.

As night fell, a few hundred remained gathered at the Welcome monument roundabout in central Jakarta, some carrying skulls and an empty coffin.

Another group, peaking at about 2,000 earlier in the day, demonstrated outside Attorney-General Andi Muhammad Ghalib's office in the city's south, demanding a tough probe into Suharto's wealth.

Some entered the building, but there was no trouble.

Another group of about 500 marched along the main airport towards parliament.

Habibie has announced an independent probe into the former leader's wealth, but students question its credibility.

The capital remains tense with a heavy military presence on the streets, including armoured cars and small tanks, after bloody protests and rioting swept the city this month.

At least 14 people died during clashes between protesters and security forces almost two weeks ago.

At least another 13 died Sunday when simmering ethnic and religious tensions exploded into mob violence in the capital's historic Chinatown district.

Five journalists get awards but only two make it to ceremony

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Five journalists who risked their lives to report the news in Belarus, Peru, Niger, Indonesia and Eritrea Tuesday receive prestigious international press freedom awards.

But three will not be there at the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists' (CPJ) gala dinner: Ruth Simon has been in jail in Eritrea for the past two years; Pavel Sheremet was forbidden to travel by the Belarus government and Goenawan Mohammad is covering upheavals in Indonesia.

The other two winners, who gave news conferences at the United Nations, are Grentah Boucar, founder of Niger's Radio Anani, and Gustavo Gorriti, one of Latin America's best known journalists who was expelled from Peru for his reporting on the military and now is being prosecuted in Panama for investigating government links with Colombian drug lords.

The U.S. State Department took the unusual step of rebuking the Belarus government of President Alexander Lukashenko for denying Sheremet a visa. He is the Minsk bureau chief of the Russian television station ORT and editor-in-chief of

Belaruskaya Delovaya Gazeta.

Sheremet, a 27-year-old award winning journalist, according to CPJ director Ann Cooper, has undergone every conceivable type of harassment, including prison for criticism of Lukashenko's government. After muzzling domestic opposition and local news media, Lukashenko has attempted to shut out Russian broadcasts, a prime source of news in his country.

Criticising Belarus's actions as a move to silence reporting it did not like, the State Department said in a statement: "Mr. Sheremet should be able to enjoy his fundamental human rights, including freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom to travel."

The Peruvian winner is Gustavo Gorriti, 50, who began his career unmasking military death squads massacring peasants in the Peruvian highlands.

In 1992 the army broke into his home and hauled him away but his fame in Latin America and the United States resulted in his release and expulsion.

He went to Panama to write for the La Prensa newspaper, documenting close ties between Colombian drug lords and

government officials. Now Panama is prosecuting him.

He told reporters that Latin America still remained one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a journalist because in most countries legislative and judicial institutions could not control a powerful executive. Consequently, the press served as the main outlet for criticism.

He said for most corrupt people "image laundering" was even more important than money laundering. But he saw hope for journalists in face of inevitable government reprisals because of global communications that rulers could not control.

Grentah Boucar, 39, is the owner and director of Radio Anani, a leading private broadcasting company in the West African country of Niger with three radio stations.

Soldiers vandalised the main station and kept it off the air after 1996 elections.

won by General Ibrahim Bare Mainassara under dubious circumstances. Boucar and a guard were arrested and charged with organising their own attack to attract financial aid from abroad.

As news spread throughout Niamey, thousands of citizens marched to the sta-

tion to express their support.

Since early 1997 he and his staff have been repeatedly jailed, harassed and threatened for giving opposition parties and union leaders a voice.

Boucar said sometimes he felt like he was fighting a losing battle but noted that in a continent of high illiteracy radio broadcasts made a difference.

Ruth Simon, an Eritrean correspondent for Agence France Presse, married with two young children, has been in jail since April 25, 1997, the first journalist arrested since Eritrea became a state in 1993.

Her offence was to report that President Isayas Afewerki told a seminar that Eritrean soldiers were fighting alongside rebels in the Sudan.

Goenawan Mohammad, 57, a prominent Indonesian journalist, is founder and chief editor of the Tempo news magazine. He underwent years of harassment under the ex-President Suharto's government.

Tempo was banned in 1994 and lasted until Suharto resigned last May. The magazine reopened in October and immediately investigated rapes of Chinese women during the May rioting before Suharto's resignation.

Hunger situation in Cambodia comparable to North Korea

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — Hunger and malnutrition in Cambodia are reaching crisis levels comparable to the effects of famine in North Korea, a U.N. World Food Programme representative said Tuesday.

Though North Korea is suffering from a simple lack of food, a faltering economy in Cambodia combined with weak health care and education is causing similar levels of malnutrition in children, said Ken Davies, the WFP's country director.

"There is enough rice. The problem is that people are too poor to access it. The problem is poverty," Davies said.

The WFP is currently supporting 1.7 million hungry Cambodians — about 15 per cent of the population — with food-for-work and direct assistance programmes, but Davies said he fears there are still plenty more that are not getting enough to eat every day.

"The problem is so bad that it is only a little worse in North Korea," Davies said. "The situation is much worse than most people recognise."

According to a recent WFP survey, 49 per cent of Cambodian children under

age 5 are stunted by lack of food and 20 per cent suffer from acute malnutrition.

By comparison, a similar survey of North Korean children under seven found that 65 per cent are stunted and 16 per cent suffer from acute malnutrition.

Cambodia has produced a rice surplus for export in the last two years and expects another this year, but WFP statistics show that 25 per cent of rice-growing areas account for 75 per cent of the surplus.

The majority of Cambodian farmers are not producing enough to keep their families fed and are being increasingly saddled with debts incurred when they run out of reserves before harvest, Davies said.

Money-lenders in rural Cambodia typically charge 100 per cent interest, which must be paid in rice at harvest time, giving many farmers a handicapped start on the next crop season.

Poor sanitation, lack of health care and ignorance of modern child rearing — problems left mostly unaddressed by under-funded health and education sectors in Cambodia — have exacerbated the food security prob-

lem, Davies said.

Davies urged the new government to substantially increase annual expenditures on health, education and rural development as a first step in a long-term solution to Cambodia's food crisis.

"The poverty is getting worse right now and the situation with the malnutrition of children is a crisis," Davies said.

Cambodia typically earmarks about half of its annual budget to defence and security. In the 1998 budget, education was allocated 6.5 per cent, health 4.4 per cent and rural development 0.2 per cent.

Actual disbursements to the three ministries are often only 60 to 70 per cent of the budgeted amount as annual revenues fall short of expectations, according to aid workers.

A 1999 budget draft proposed a reduction of the health ministry's allotment, which caused an outcry in September from health officials and the U.N. World Health Programme. The draft was later readjusted to provide an unprecedented 33 per cent increase in health spending.

'Nigerian human rights situation positive'

LAGOS (AFP) — A senior envoy currently undertaking a human rights assessment mission for the United Nations to Nigeria said that the situation is "positive", according to press reports Tuesday.

"The changes in your country have been positive and encouraging, and by these changes, the international community has developed new interest in the country," U.N. special rapporteur Soli Sorabjee told journalists when in Abuja to see top Nigerian officials.

The Indian former attorney-general, who arrived Sunday for a nine-day visit on the invitation of General Abdulsalam Abubakar, said the military ruler should be commended for "his magic transformation" of Nigerian human rights situation.

Sorabjee said his U.N. team would also visit Kaduna and Kano in the north and Port Harcourt, capital of the ethnically volatile southern Rivers State, to "feel the pulse of the nation".

"We shall assess, listen and see for ourselves as much as possible, the current situation in the country and report back to the U.N.," he said. Sorabjee, who was appointed special rapporteur on Nigeria in October last year, has been mandated to establish direct contacts with government officials, diplomats, human right organisations and other interest groups.

Nigeria was widely criticised for human rights violations during the regime of former military ruler General Sani Abacha, who died in June this year.

Abubakar, who succeeded Abacha, has won praise from the international community by releasing scores of political prisoners clamped into detention by his predecessor.

He has also promised to repeal laws which authorise detention without trial.

Cambodian opposition leader in feisty return

PHNOM PENH (R) — Cambodian opposition leader Sam Rainsy returned home in a feisty mood Tuesday but his welcome was stifled by a security clampdown on his supporters.

Police used electric batons to break up a crowd awaiting the former finance minister's arrival at Phnom Penh airport, witnesses said, and sealed off the city centre to stop rallies.

Sam Rainsy had left Cambodia in September and said he was frightened to return. He said on his arrival Tuesday he would continue to push for "real democracy" and fight "dictatorship".

"Our party has at least 15 seats, that clearly share a goal with the people of Cambodia: to get rid of the dictatorship and build a real democracy," he said in a statement.

"Not the fake democracy that satisfies the international community while it fills the pockets of (former) Hun Sen and his allies," he said. In July elections, Sam Rainsy's party trailed behind Hun Sen's ruling Cambodian

People's Party and the party of Prince Norodom Ranariddh, deposed as co-premier by Hun Sen last year.

Hun Sen and Ranariddh stitched up a new alliance this month when they finally agreed to form a coalition government. Hun Sen did not win enough seats in July to form a government alone.

Sam Rainsy told reporters after his arrival Tuesday that he would wait before judging the new government.

"I will give them the benefit of the doubt," Sam Rainsy, long Hun Sen's most fiery critic, said after arriving from Bangkok. "I will judge them according to their deeds." He said he was not worried about his security: "Since I have done nothing wrong, I have nothing to fear," he said.

Police used clubs to block Sam Rainsy's supporters on motor-scooters from following him into the city from the airport, witnesses said.

He travelled straight to a Buddhist temple near parliament for a memorial service

for victims of political violence.

Phnom Penh authorities refused him permission to hold a service in a park outside parliament where he led opposition protests over the July general election, and where he survived a deadly grenade attack on a rally he was holding last year.

Police blocked off streets around the temple, the park and parliament throughout the day. Police refused to let him lay a wreath on the spot where one of his supporters was shot dead during a protest in September, his party officials said.

"It doesn't bode well for their democratic intentions," one party official said.

Sam Rainsy and Ranariddh had protested against Hun Sen's strong election showing in July, accusing his party of fraud and intimidation.

But after more than three months of deadlock and bloody street clashes between opposition supporters and police, Ranariddh agreed on Nov. 13 to form a coalition.



French President Jacques Chirac (left) embraces the internationally renowned French Mime artist Marcel Marceau as he presents him with the 'Order of Merit' Medal at the Elysee Palace (Reuters photo)

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation Establishment
جوردين تايمز يومية عربية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

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Facsimile: Editorial: 5696183, Advertising: 5693337

E-mail: jtimes@go.com.jo

Web Site: <http://www.access2arabia.com/jordantimes/>

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times Advertising Department

Symbol of independence

THE OPENING of the Gaza international airport Monday is certainly a milestone in the continuing efforts of the Palestinians for statehood. Now, and for the first time, the Palestinians have access to the outside world, especially neighbouring Arab states, with minimal Israeli interference.

In effect, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) can now export Palestinian goods and import Arab and non-Arab commodities as most countries do. Even more important, Palestinians can now travel to other lands without having to acquire Israeli permission. With a planned airport in the West Bank Palestinians will also be able to travel between Gaza and Ramallah without difficulty.

No wonder the opening ceremony was conducted with much fanfare involving inaugural flights of several Arab airlines including Royal Jordanian. President Bill Clinton is expected to fly directly to Gaza later this year to attend the Palestinian national assembly's session to amend the Palestinian Charter. Despite the resentment generated by Israel's refusal to free Palestinian political prisoners as called for in the Wye River accord, the peace agreement between Israel and the PNA appears to be generally on course. This augurs well for the peace process as a whole. The momentum of peace is picking up speed, and the opening of the Gaza airport has been accomplished.

The most important aspect of the opening of the Gaza international airport is its political significance as a symbol of national sovereignty. The fact that so many Arab airlines rushed to the opening ceremony signifies an Arab yearning to see the Palestinians realise their independent state on their own soil. This message should not miss Israel and Israeli leaders.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Raja Elissa reiterated his call for the Arab Nation to stand together and shield Iraq from the devastating conspiracy formed against it. The Arabs are the owners of the land, and they know how to defend themselves, said Elissa. In New York, the United Nations must realise the negative effect Richard Butler, UNSCOM chief inspector, has by impeding the progress of arms inspections in Iraq, said Elissa. It is in Butler's best interest to extend the mission of the U.N. in Iraq so that he does not lose his job after the sanctions are lifted, added the writer. On the other hand, everybody has to understand that Scott Ritter is a Mossad spy, said Elissa, and Ritter himself had admitted that fact. The writer expressed hope that the United States would understand those facts.

Al Dostour's Orieh Rintawi claimed that although most of the Arab leaders declared their opposition to the United States' efforts to topple President Saddam Hussein by a military strike, yet are maintaining secret contacts with the American administration to guarantee that the next military strike on Iraq will be the final one. He said that they do not mind if Saddam is overthrown; in fact they are looking forward to an Iraq without Saddam. Rintawi said there are thousands of reasons to sympathise with the Iraqi people, but such sentiments do not count in this brutal world. It is the Iraqi leadership which is able to save its people from the sanctions, said Rintawi.

Washington Watch

Republicans and impeachment

Dr. James Zogby

THE REPUBLICAN Party is in a quandary. On the one hand it is clear that the Republicans' impeachment strategy backfired in the 1998 elections. Both speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich and the Chair of the National Republican Conference, John Boehner lost their jobs over their political miscalculations. They had assumed that by attacking Clinton voters would reward Republicans with electoral victories. The result proved them wrong. The newly-elected Republican leadership wants the impeachment business over before the end of the year and the United States' Republican Governors are pushing for the party to adopt a more moderate, constructive brand of politics.

This desire to move beyond impeachment is based not only on the election results, which saw Republicans lose some of their edge over the Democrats. It is also based on at least five other factors:

1. There are not enough votes in the House to impeach the president. There are most certainly not enough votes in the U.S. Senate to remove Clinton from office.
2. While Independent Counsel (IC) Ken Starr has spent four years and \$40 million in an effort to establish his case against Clinton, many legal experts, political leaders and a strong majority of the U.S. public simply do not feel that what the president is accused of is an impeachable offence.
3. There is growing concern about the methods used by the office of the IC in making their case against the president. A court-appointed counsel is currently investigating

Starr and his tactics.

4. Not only the public-at-large, but Republicans as well, are displeased with this entire saga. A recent poll showed that 60 per cent of Republicans want the president to remain in office. Clinton's approval rating among Republicans is a strong 52 per cent to 36 per cent.

One-third of Republicans believe that their own party voted to begin the impeachment process not because the charges warranted such action but because they wanted to damage the president — hardly an endorsement of this strategy.

5. Not only moderate, but some conservative Republicans as well, want to end their party's obsession with "getting Clinton" and focus instead on advocating a Republican issue agenda. They believe that if the party does not focus on a positive agenda, it will flounder in 2000.

Nevertheless, despite these pressures to change course, the impeachment process is continuing, in part because once begun, it has to run its course. There are also a number of hard-line enemies of the president who are determined to pursue him and to continue their practice of attack politics.

These two opposing pressures are pulling at the Republican Party, but in the end, barring any new and dramatic developments, the supporters of continuing the impeachment process will lose.

Not only has the newly-elected speaker of the House Bob Livingston made it emphatically clear that he does

not want to be burdened with this time-consuming process when his term of office begins in January 1999, but by that time, the politics of 2000 will become too powerful a force, sweeping away unneeded distractions.

Livingston, though quite conservative, is a pragmatic legislator. Unlike his predecessor, Newt Gingrich, Livingston is not an ideologue and has no vendettas to carry out against Democrats. He wants to legislate and develop a track record for efficient leadership.

Livingston has, therefore, been emphatic that come January, he wants his agenda to be the focus of Congress, not impeachment. Having seen how the impeachment strategy almost lost the party their leadership role (a shift of a combined total of only 9,000 votes in six different races would have given Democrats control of the Congress), it is unlikely that any of the leading Republican presidential hopefuls are going to want that issue hanging over their heads next year. And they are most certainly not going to want Clinton removed and have Vice President Al Gore elevated to the presidency. Republicans do not want to run against an incumbent Gore, especially when Gore will be riding on the tide of public resentment over the Republican treatment of Clinton.

So do not be fooled by the "sound and fury" of the next few weeks. It signifies nothing more than the agonising death of a failed effort. Clinton will survive. Impeachment and removal will fail. It will be a painful and messy end. But it will soon end, despite a last-ditch effort to keep it alive.



Bright red medicine for miracle cure

By Gregory Palast

CINDERELLA'S FAIRY godmother and Augusto Pinochet have much in common. Both have magic powers. Pinochet is credited with the Miracle of Chile, the successful experiment in free markets, privatisation, deregulation and union-free economic expansion whose laissez faire seeds spread from Santiago to Surrey, from Valparaiso to Virginia.

But Cinderella's pumpkin did not really turn into a coach. And the Miracle of Chile is another fairy-tale. The claim that Pinochet began an economic powerhouse is one of those utterances whose truth rests on its reputation.

Chile can claim economic success. But that is entirely the work of Marxist leader Salvador Allende, who saved his nation, miraculously, a decade after his death.

In 1973, the year the general seized power, Chile's unemployment rate was cut by 4.3 per cent. In 1983, after 10 years of free-market modernisation, unemployment reached 22 per cent. Real wages declined by 40 per cent under military rule. In 1970, 20 per cent of Chile's population lived in poverty. By 1990, the year "President" Pinochet left office the number of destitute people had doubled to 40 per cent. Quite a miracle.

Pinochet did not destroy Chile's economy all by himself. He had the help of academia's most brilliant minds: a gaggle of Milton Friedman's trainees, the Chicago Boys. Under their spell, the general abolished the minimum wage, outlawed union bargaining, privatised the pension system, abolished all taxes on wealth and business profits, slashed public employment, privatised 212 industries and 66 banks and ran a fiscal surplus.

Free of the dead hand of bureaucracy, taxes and unions, the country took a giant leap... into bankruptcy and depression. After nine years of Chicago-style economics, Chile's industry keeled over and died.

In 1982 and 1983, GDP dropped by 19 per cent. Blood and glass littered the laboratory floor, yet the mad scientists of Chicago declared a success. The U.S. State Department concluded: "Chile is a casebook study in sound economic management." It was Friedman who himself coined the phrase "Miracle of Chile." Friedman's sidekick, economist Art Laffer, preened that Pinochet's Chile was, "a showcase of what supply-side economics can do."

It certainly was. More exactly, Chile was a showcase of deregulation gone berserk. The

Chicago Boys persuaded the junta that removing restrictions on the nation's banks would free them to attract foreign capital to fund industrial expansion. Pinochet sold off the state banks — at a 40 per cent discount against book value.

They fell into the hands of two conglomerate empires, controlled by speculators Javier Vial and Manuel Cruzat. Using these banks, Vial and Cruzat bought up manufacturers, then leveraged these assets with loans from foreign investors panting for their piece of the state give-away.

By 1982, the pyramid finance game was up. The Vial and Cruzat "Grupos" defaulted. Industry shut down, private pensions became worthless, and the currency swooned. Riots and strikes by a population too desperate to fear bullets forced Pinochet to boot out his beloved Chicago experimentalists.

Reluctantly, the general restored the minimum wage and collective bargaining. Having previously decimated the ranks of state employees, he authorised a programme to create 500,000 jobs.

Chile was pulled from depression by dull old Keynesian remedies, all Franklin Roosevelt, zero Margaret Thatcher. (The junta even instituted what is today South America's only law restricting the flow of foreign capital).

New Deal tactics rescued Chile from the panic of 1983, but the nation's long-term recovery and growth is the result of (cover the children's ears) a large dose of socialism. To save the nation's pension system, Pinochet nationalised banks and industry on a scale unimaginable by Allende. The general expropriated at will, offering little or no compensation. While most were eventually privatised, the state retained ownership of one industry: copper.

For nearly a century, copper has meant Chile and Chile has meant copper. Janet Finn, metals expert at the University of Montana, remarks: "It's absurd to describe a nation as a miracle of free enterprise when the engine of the economy remains in government hands." And not just any government: a Pinochet law, still in force, gives the military 10 per cent of state copper revenues.

Copper has provided between 30 and 70 per cent of the nation's export earnings. This is the hard currency that has built today's Chile. The proceeds from the mines seized from Anaconda and Kennecott in 1973 was Allende's posthumous gift to his nation.



Chile's 'long-term recovery and growth is the result of (cover the children's ears) a large dose of socialism.'

LETTERS

So-called good teachers

To the editor:

I READ the impressive letter from Dr. Sue Dahdah in Monday's Jordan Times, and her "fear for this society in coming generation."

Although this should be a focus of educators' attention, it should not be forgotten that parents too have a profound role in transferring moral values to their children.

Caring teachers with a strong sense of commitment and value would never break their teaching contract without any prior notice in order to earn more money. It takes a few days or even weeks to hire a replacement, and the real victims are the students who remain without teachers. Those private schools who hire teachers on this way, are not getting "good" teachers, rather they are getting irresponsible teachers. The lucky school is the one who loses them.

Dr. Naimeh Kashan
Educational/social researcher

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Agribusiness was the second locomotive of the Allende years. According to Professor Arturo Vasquez of Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., Allende's land reform broke-up of feudal estates (which Pinochet could not fully reverse), created a new class of productive tiller-owners who, along with corporate and cooperative operators, now bring in a stream of export earnings to rival copper.

"In order to have an economic miracle," says Vasquez, "maybe you need a socialist government first to commit agrarian reform." So there we have it. Keynes and Marx saved Chile, not Friedman. But the myth of the free-market miracle persists because it serves a quasi-religious function. Within the faith of the Reaganites and Thatcherites, Chile provides the necessary Genesis fable, the ersatz Eden from which laissez faire dogma sprang, successful and shining.

Half a globe away from Chile, an economic experiment is succeeding quietly and bloodlessly. The southern Indian state of Kerala is the laboratory for the humane development theories of Amartya Sen, winner of this year's Nobel Prize for Economics. Committed to income redistribution and universal social-services, Kerala built an economy on intensive public education. The world's most literate state, it earns a hard currency from exporting technical assistance to Gulf nations. If you've heard little or nothing of Sen and Kerala, maybe it is because they pose an annoying challenge to the neo-liberal consensus.

Last week, the international finance Gang of Four — World Bank, IMF, Inter-American Development Bank and United Nations Development Programme — offered a \$41.5 billion line of credit to Brazil. But before the agencies hand over the life-belt, they want Brazil to swallow the economic medicine that nearly killed Chile. You know the list: fire-sale privatisations, flexible labour markets and deficit reduction through savage cuts in government services and social security.

Here in São Paulo the public is assured that these cruel measures will ultimately benefit the average Brazilian. What looks like financial colonialism is sold as the cure-all that had miraculous results in Chile. But that miracle was a hoax, a fraud, a fairy tale in which everyone did not live happily ever after.

— The Observer

Obstacles to peace

Israel stealthily 'creating facts on the ground'

The Wye Plantation agreement reluctantly agreed by Benjamin Netanyahu is making near-impossible demands on Yasser Arafat. In return, Israel must further "redeploy" its troops. Yet Palestinian sovereignty would only extend to less than 20 per cent of the West Bank — a bad omen for final status talks. And all the while the building of Israeli settlements grinds quietly on.

By Geoffrey Aronson

WHILE ALL eyes have been on the latest brokered accord in the Middle East, another, arguably more decisive effort to resolve the future of the territories captured by Israel in June 1967, is under way. Israel's policy of "creating facts on the ground" — establishing new Israeli settlements and expanding existing ones throughout the occupied territories — is well on its way to reaching an objective sought by a succession of Israeli leaders over the past three decades: preventing the creation of an independent, sovereign Palestinian political entity west of the Jordan.

During its more than two years in power, the Likud government of Benjamin Netanyahu has learned the art of "building quietly." Construction is continuing inexorably in the more than 170 settlement communities, housing some 350,000 Israelis, established across the pre-1967 war ceasefire line separating Israel from the West Bank and Gaza Strip (180,000 in annexed East Jerusalem, 164,500 in the West Bank and 5,500 in the Gaza Strip).

Tracking expansion in the settlements is more an art than a science. The Israeli authorities rarely make data available and press reports are usually imprecise and often contradictory. The minister of defence, Yitzhak Mordechai, has approved the additional construction of just over 2,000 units in the occupied territories, excluding East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, since Mr. Netanyahu came to power. None the less, 5,000 units are reported in various phases of construction in the West Bank and Gaza.

At a meeting of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee on June 22, Yossi Sarid challenged Mr. Mordechai to give an accurate account of the expansion: "I have already asked you twice to present before this committee all the approvals you have given for the expansion of settlements, and all you do is evade the question."

The upsurge in settlement expansion in the West Bank which began during the summer of 1997 has continued this year. The Netanyahu "Around Jerusalem" construction plan is being directed by Nach Kinari, who oversaw settlement expansion for the Labour government of the assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin — a telling illustration of the national consensus in favour of the permanent retention of the West Bank between Ramallah and Hebron. If implemented, the plan for an "umbrella municipality" for Jerusalem and environs, unveiled recently, will bring West Bank settlements in "Greater Jerusalem" one administrative step further along the road to de facto

annexation.

In the Etzion Bloc, south of Jerusalem, 630 new dwelling units are currently being built alongside 1,300 existing houses. Hundreds more are under construction in the larger settlement towns of Efrat, Ma'ale Adumim, and Betar. For the first time the settlers have started making concrete to meet the increased demand for construction materials.

In the Benjamin region north and west of Jerusalem, more than 20,000 Israelis live in 30 settlements. Here there are 1,500 new dwellings under construction — enough to increase the population by 6,000. There is even expansion at Beit Al, where 150 new homes are under construction, with an additional 50 expected to begin before the end of the year. Just north of Ramallah, Beit Al is home to almost 700 families and is one of the few settlements that may come into closer proximity to territory controlled by the Palestinian [National] Authority — if Israel redeploy its forces as required by the Oslo accords. Less than 10 kilometres south-west of Beit Al lies the dormitory of Givat Ze'ev, a settlement whose population is now approaching 10,000. The road north meets a bypass built as part of Israel's redeployment from Ramallah so that Jerusalem-bound settlers from the Talmon settlement bloc to the north can avoid the Palestinian areas of Ramallah and Betunia.

Expansion is readily apparent throughout this bloc of settlement communities, which includes Dolev (population 500), Talmon A and B (800), Nachliel (300) and Halaminsh (1,000). At Dolev, ground preparation is well under way and new infrastructure is being built on a hill south of the existing settlement. At Talmon, a block of two-storey houses is almost completed. While just to the east, a new water tower marks the site of the new settlement of Horeb-Yaron where 13 mobile homes were sited almost a year ago. At Halaminsh and at the settlement of Paduel further to the north, land is being prepared for future expansion.

At the south-western approach to the settlement of Ariel, a sign announces one of the many new industrial parks now being built in the West Bank: Ariel South. Here a new interchange of the Trans-Samaria Highway (Road 5) is being re-routed and expanded. The 13 per cent redeployment under discussion will leave this route securely under full Israeli control. Driving west, the few kilometres to the Green Line along Road 5 have been transformed into Israel, with a gaggle of Arab and Israeli commercial and industrial enterprises catering to the growing population on either side of the disappearing border.

Even in the Jordan Valley settlements with their economic problems and stagnant population, a new wave of expansion is taking place as part of a coalition agreement between Mr. Netanyahu and the Third Way Party (formed by dissident Labour Party generals).

The most recent comprehensive data available on settlement expansion covers the second half of last year, which saw an explosion in building starts

throughout the occupied territories. New construction is under way at 93 of the 130 settlements in the West Bank. Because of their distance from existing facilities, at least 13 of these construction sites can be considered new settlements. Press reports place the number of new units under construction at 5,000 last year. And according to other sources, 4,000 more have been approved in the West Bank — enough to increase the settler population by more than 10 per cent.

The increase in the settler population, according to Aaron Domb, the general secretary of the settler council Yesba (4), "is a positive achievement for the settlement project and comes in spite of political constraints connected to the construction of apartments in Jewish areas of Judea and Samaria." A diplomatic observer commented that "the number of [construction] starts is extraordinary considering how low demand is in Israel and the growth rate in the settlements themselves."

Preliminary figures for the first 10 months of last year show double-digit population increases in settlements: 11.2 per cent in the Nablus region, 10.2 per cent in the Ramallah region, and 10 per cent in Gaza — more than three times the national Israeli rate. Almost 80 per cent of the 4,000 to 5,000 dwelling units on which construction began last year have been sold, according to numbers compiled by the prime minister's office. This surprising level of demand, in contrast to the slowdown in the Israeli housing market, comes from the less expensive housing prices in settlements compared with costs in Israel itself. For example, a detached villa of 150-square metres in the small settlement of Nokdim, south-east of Bethlehem, sells for \$110,000 — the price of a two-room flat in Jerusalem.

In another demonstration of the government's effort to "create facts" in anticipation of further army redeployment and final status talks with the Palestinians, one well-informed source reports that government-financed infrastructure work is proceeding at between 80 and 90 of the 120 West Bank settlements. In most cases, this work is being undertaken on lands for which at present there are no approved construction plans. Plans to build more than 9,000 dwelling units in West Bank settlements — one report puts the West Bank settlements — one report puts the figure at 20,000 (5) — are in the process of being approved.

In August 1996, Mr. Mordechai was invested with the power to approve all settlement construction. Since then, he has given final approval for fewer than 2,500 new units. How then was construction begun on more than twice as many dwellings? Many of the units begun last year were actually approved during the government of Yitzhak Shamir but were frozen after 1992 by Mr. Rabin. The Rabin government itself approved more dwellings than were actually begun during its tenure. Taking a page from Labour's book, the Netanyahu government appears to be quietly "unfreezing" many of these units after deciding that construction could start without Mr. Mordechai's formal approval. And most of this building work is taking place in small-

er settlements and, inexplicably, has not been included in government statistics.

In spite of this expansion, the organisation Peace Now reports a vacancy rate of 25 per cent (454 units out of 1,800) in the Gaza settlements. Yet tenders for the construction of 100 new units were recently issued for the Gaza settlement of Nisanit, near the Jabalya refugee camp.

The surge in settlement expansion towards the end of last year came just as the Clinton administration was expressing the need to include some measure of restraint in the Netanyahu government's expansion policies, and at a time when Netanyahu himself was making assurances that "there won't be any substantial expansion of settlements and no substantial confiscation [of land]." At the time, U.S. diplomacy towards the issue of settlement expansion focused on the need for a halt in "unhelpful unilateral acts... that prejudice issues reserved for final status negotiations," as stated by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in a speech before the National Press Club on August 6, 1997. This formulation was later reconstituted as a "time-out" in settlement expansion, and most recently explained as an effort to restrict settlement expansion to already built-up areas comprising approximately three per cent of the West Bank.

In response to reports of large-scale settlement expansion, the State Department has galvanised its intelligence and monitoring efforts. But U.S. attempts to receive prompt information from the Netanyahu government have been stymied by the defence ministry. According to well-informed sources, a top Mordechai aide refused a request made by U.S. Ambassador Ned Walker for information on settlement housing expansion in the West Bank, noting that the release of such information would only cause problems between Israel and the U.S. The U.S. request, not inconsistent with promises made by Netanyahu to President Clinton at their first meeting in June 1996, was not repeated. Indeed, a cable under Walker's signature is said to have been sent to Washington advising that the U.S. refrain from further efforts to constrain settlement expansion.

The Palestinian leadership has distinguished itself by its almost total lack of interest in or familiarity with settlements. They have not been able to avoid seeing the growing suburbs of Jerusalem, but mention places such as Dolev Ze'evs of tomorrow — and their faces go blank. The diplomatic path that the Palestinians have joined, and the conditions it imposes, leave them few options materially to change either the pace or the implications of Israel's settlement policies.

Those who oversaw the creation of Oslo either wilfully ignored the centrality of settlements or, more likely, inexplicably failed to understand their importance as the prime indicator of Israeli intentions. There is a widely held belief among diaspora Palestinians involved in talks with Israel that the physical transformation of the land brought about by settlement expansion can (and will) be undone by a political decision. They cite the precedent of Yamit and other Sinai settlements, which were dismantled in 1982 after the peace deal with Egypt. This is to forget that Israel ceded the Sinai precisely in order to safeguard its control of the West Bank. And that a peace agreement between two strong states such as Egypt and Israel is qualitatively different from an Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement.

There is today no powerful, articulate voice among the Palestinian leadership arguing that a halt to settlement expansion is a basic requirement of any negotiating framework. Yasser Arafat is briefed infrequently on Israel's settlement policy and his response is generally stunned silence as he looks at the map. Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and Ahmad Qureia (Abu Ala'a) have never been on a "settlement tour." Settlements can, they believe, be made to disappear or to dry up with the stroke of an Israeli diplomat's pen. For them, the most important objective is to establish the foundations for Palestinian sovereignty on whatever territories Israel can be convinced to surrender.

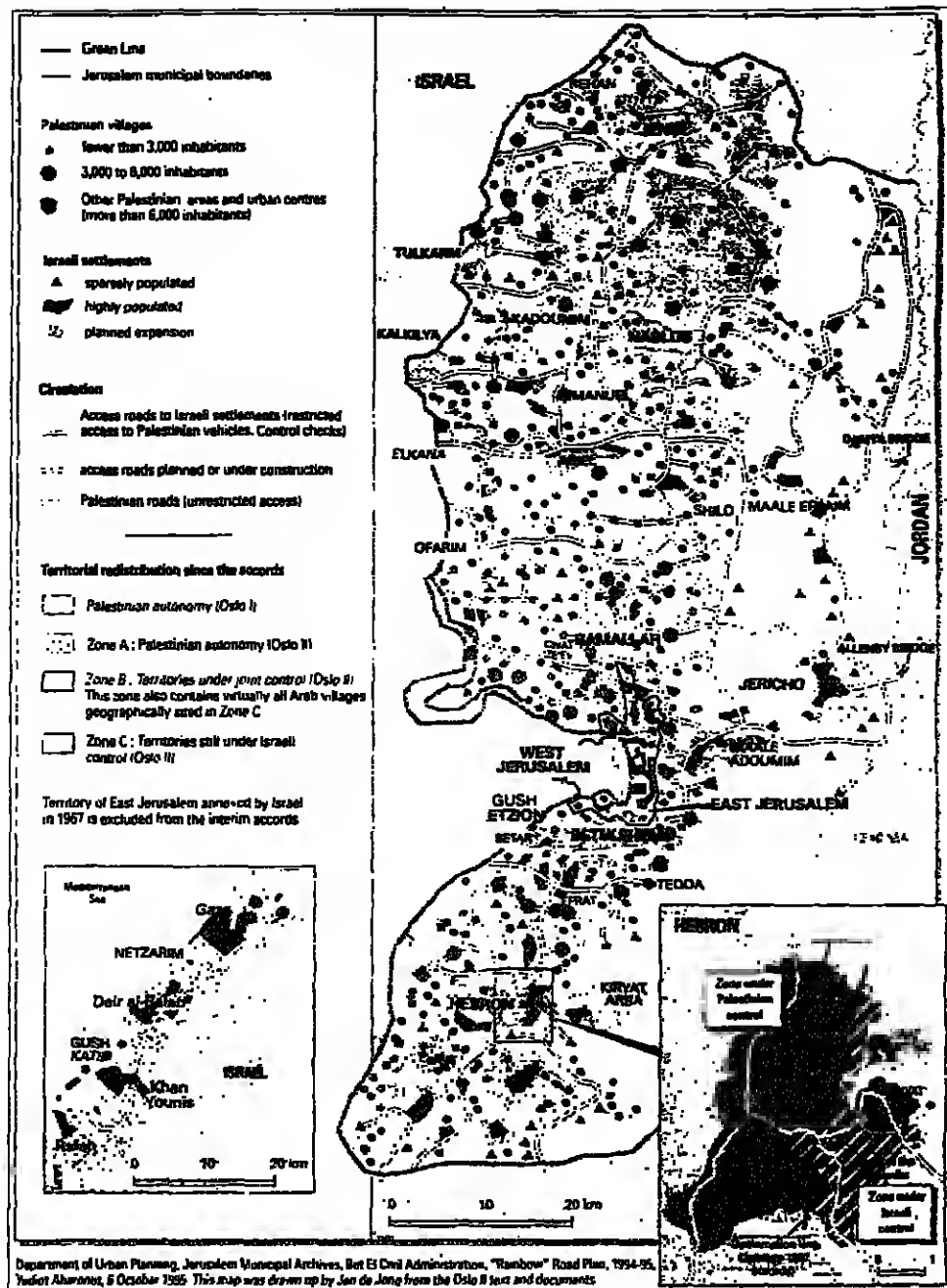
The "American initiative," which they approved in London in early June, simply required Israel not to construct new settlements or to engage in the

"substantial expansion" of settlements outside contiguous areas. These are the exact formulations that Netanyahu has himself used for more than a year. And during this period almost 20 new settlement areas have been established and the ground has been broken for thousands of new settlement dwelling units.

All this testifies to the failure not only of the Palestinians to contain Israel's settlement drive, but also of the U.S. to impart any real meaning to "its vociferous demand for a 'time-out'." More than two years after the Likud leader's victory, U.S. policy makers have yet to recover from the defeat of Shimon Peres. In the absence of an Israeli partner ready to implement the Oslo accords, the Clinton administration has proven unable to agree upon a credible strategy for fulfilling even the limited prospects of the Oslo framework.

The Palestinians' tacit agreement to permit Israel to maintain and expand settlements has established a precedent that will be difficult to alter in final-status talks. And more Palestinians are beginning to acknowledge that allowing any settlements to remain in the final status will prevent any credible degree of Palestinian sovereignty, not necessarily because of the settlements themselves (which directly control less than 15 per cent of the West Bank), but because the extensive security measures required to ensure their existence — including the ever-expanding system of roads linking settlements with each other and with Israel — are such as to justify the permanent presence of the Israeli army.

— Le Monde Diplomatique



Vietnamese still suffering effects of Agent Orange

By Pascale Trouillard
Agence France Presse

TWO-YEAR-OLD Minh Hien, with a massive head over her slender body that she cannot lift off the bed is one of many victims of Agent Orange receiving treatment at Tu Du hospital here.

Next to her is a year-old baby weighing no more than 1.4 kilograms, with a crumpled little face, ribs stuck in his nose, and with no hope of improvement.

"What can be done?" sighs Le Diem Huong, head of the neonatal department. "We just have to care for them till they die."

The Vietnam war ended 23 years ago but still claims victims through genetic mutations in the children of those who fought and civilians contaminated by the dioxin present in the 44 million litres of Agent Orange the U.S. air force dumped on South Vietnam to clear forests harbouring communist troops.

While the United States holds that no conclusive proof has been found linking Agent Orange to the genetic changes, the Vietnamese government says some 50,000 deformed children have been born to people exposed to it.

At Tu Du hospital, nearly 340 children, or one in a hundred, were born with congenital defects last year.

Officials in charge of caring for the presumed victims sum up the profile of cases: malformed babies and children, some lacking legs, arms or with webbed digits or club-feet. Nearly all are abandoned by their parents who cannot cope.

"We are unable to carry out tests costing \$2,000 per patient to establish with certitude

that there's a high level of dioxin in the body," says cancer specialist Phan Trung Hoa.

Doctors ask victims' parents if they had lived during the war in zones where defoliants were dropped, such as along the 17th parallel which divided the two Vietnams or in some southern regions.

In Ben Tre province in the south for instance, congenital defects are five times greater than in Ho Chi Minh City.

"The dioxin has caused many forms of cancer: cancer of the liver, or digestive organs, of the genitalia or of the placenta," says Hoa. "It also causes incurable nervous disorders, paralyses, multiple defects and mental retardation."

Tu Du is seeking cooperation with medical entities in the United States, some 200,000 of whose former soldiers are believed contaminated in Vietnam.

It also wants tie-ups with Japan. Lacking research funds, the hospital, the biggest in Vietnam for treating suspected Agent Orange cases, is focusing on treatment: orthopaedics, physiotherapy, surgery, nourishment for children and rudimentary education for the least serious cases.

Today as coffee, hevea and rice grow as if by miracle in the defoliated regions, the Vietnamese are asking themselves whether Agent Orange might usher in a third generation of victims. Researchers are focusing efforts on the reproductive process of tortoises, the longest living fauna.

Hanoi says Agent Orange has claimed between 100,000 and a million victims in Vietnam, many already dead. It is only recently that Vietnam, especially its press, has begun a real discussion of the cases, which are often found

in isolated rural areas, many almost immobile and ignorant of the cause of their suffering.

Vietnam's Red Cross set up in July this year the first fund for Agent Orange victims and established "peace villages" for the sufferers with foreign help.

Belatedly, Hanoi too, which has never officially asked for reparations, began to sound out Washington last year about "cooperation to overcome the effects of the war."



Two-year-old Minh Hien at the Tu Du hospital (file photo)



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Lebanese have high expectations of Lahoud driving through reform

BEIRUT (R) — General Emile Lahoud was sworn in as president of Lebanon Tuesday amid high expectations but formidable problems as the country struggles to put its shaky financial house in order.

It is a measure of Lebanon's fiscal difficulties that the government is this year proudly promising to meet a target of reducing the deficit from 39 to 42 per cent of spending, after years of missed targets.

"Public debt has come to equal the gross domestic product and debt-servicing absorbs most of the revenues generated from taxes and fees," said a statement by the Association of Banks in Lebanon a few hours before Lahoud's inauguration.

"The size of the public sector has become remarkably inflated compared to that of the domestic economy and the labour market," it said. "Fiscal policies adopted by the government, despite the results of the last 10 months, have failed to stabilise the ratio of debt to the domestic product."

But the situation is not entirely bleak as Lahoud, the hard-working former commander of the armed forces, begins his six-year term.

The reduced deficit has helped slow the rate at which the public debt has been growing. That has allowed the central bank to ease still-high interest rates, now at 16.02 per cent for the longest maturity two-year treasury bills, which in turn has reduced debt-servicing costs.

A year ago, the Lebanese pound was under threat of devaluation, with central bank reserves falling. Since Syrian backing for Lahoud was confirmed in October — ensuring his election by parliament — Lebanese have been switching from dollars to Lebanese pounds, providing a steady increase in the country's foreign reserves.

Expectations are high of Lahoud driving through reform, especially attacking the corruption that eats away at public morale and state revenues. He has a personal reputation for honesty, a down-to-earth approach that has seen him avoid the armoured convoys favoured by most prominent politicians.

"People want an administration that offers them services for their taxes and not for their taxes and bribes," Lahoud said in a speech after his inauguration.

But it will require more than populist statements to restore Lebanon's financial health. While public coffers will benefit from cracking down on tax evasion and tackling the politically taboo subject of trimming the bloated public service — about 160,000 state employees in a population of some 3.5 million — most economists believe there must be tax rises.

It will also require a return to the high growth rates Lebanon experienced after the end of the 1975-90 civil war, growth that was expected to provide the rising revenue to keep mounting public debt down to a manageable percentage of gross domestic product.

The research department of Lebanon's Banque d'Affaires du Liban and d'Outre-Mer (BLOM) in its latest weekly report said there was no incentive for investors to enter the Beirut Stock Market, which has seen business plummet this year.

The value of trade in October fell more than 75 per cent below the level for that month in 1997 to only \$27.4 million.

There has been similar weakness since the summer and November looks no healthier.

For a time, the lack of interest in the market was explained as arising from the diversion of funds into high-yielding treasury bills, but as T-bill sales have tailed off equities remain ignored.

"No end to the current malaise is in sight, although the return of political stability heralded by Emile Lahoud's election as president was no doubt welcome," the BLOM report said.

"The injection of new life required by the stock market can only be properly provided by healthy and sustained economic growth as witnessed in the three or so years prior to 1996," the report added.

A standard explanation for the stagnation of the stock market in the months preceding Lahoud's election had been the uncertainty caused by a change of president. Now he is in office, traded value on Tuesday was again a weak half a million dollars, the same as Monday.

Lahoud said he would work to fulfil the high expectations of his presidency, but he also cautioned: "I have no magic wand that achieves dreams overnight."

World growth to halve next year, study says

LONDON (R) — World economic growth will halve to 1.7 per cent in 1999 from 3.5 per cent this year, with the chance of a global recession significantly higher than at the start of the year, two independent British think tanks said Tuesday.

The London Business School (LBS) and Oxford Economic Forecasting (OEF) said the main contributors to the downturn next year would be falling domestic demand in Japan and the United States, rather than trade problems with emerging markets.

"Our biggest concern is the outlook for U.S. domestic demand," said the report. "There is a danger that households and firms will no longer be willing to borrow to support their spending and, indeed, may wish to repay debt — triggering an outright U.S. recession during 1999."

The report said the situation in Asia appeared to be beginning to stabilise as currencies recovered somewhat, industrial production bottomed out and trade positions improved.

The main constraints on an Asian recovery were the high level of real interest rates and Japan's policy paralysis.

Without a sizeable fiscal boost and an attack on the banking system's bad debts, Japan's gross

domestic product (GDP) growth might well drop below two per cent in 1999, damaging Asia and threatening the Chinese yuan, the report said.

In Europe, it said growth could be threatened if the new merged European Union currency, the euro, strengthened domestic demand could be insufficient to compensate for weaker exports, it said.

The two institutes said GDP growth in the 11

countries of the euro-zone would fall to 2.5 per cent in 1999 from 2.9 per cent this year, and could fall further if the U.S. were to slip into recession.

Global trade was endangered by problems in Russia, Brazil and emerging markets, but the direct impact on major Western economies was likely to be comparatively modest due to the relatively low level of exports from the West to these markets.

"The more serious downsides for the U.S. and Europe come not from weaker trade but from the negative effects on liquidity and investment," said the report. "Fortunately, central banks have tools to tackle these problems."

The institutes said there might be an increase in protectionism if the United States slipped into recession, and that this could threaten growth in the long term.

Exchange Rates		Tuesday, 24-11-98		ACCESS 4448888	
Currency	Unit	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
JORDAN DINAR	1,000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8779	1.8389
BAHRAIN DINAR	1,000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8779	1.8389
QATAR RYAL	1,000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8779	1.8389
KUWAIT DINAR	1,000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8779	1.8389
LIBYAN DINAR	1,000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8779	1.8389
LIBYAN DOLLAR	1,000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8779	1.8389
LIBYAN POUND	1,000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8779	1.8389
LIBYAN RIAL	1,000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8779	1.8389
LIBYAN TUNSI	1,000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8779	1.8389
LIBYAN YEMEN	1,000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8779	1.8389
LIBYAN ZIMBABWE	1,000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8779	1.8389
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LIBYAN POUND	1,000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8779	1.8389
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LOCAL
SPORTS
SCENE

Handball federation distributes dividends

AMMAN — The Jordan Handball Federation has distributed dividends to four clubs that took part in Arab and Asian Clubs Championships which were held in Amman earlier this month. Al Ahli received JD2,500, Al Salt JD2,000, Al Orthodoxi and Hartha JD500 each. The JHF will also give the clubs a percentage of its share of a contract that was signed with the JTV to televise the matches.

Jordan attends World Boxing Federation elections

AMMAN — Vice President of the Jordan and Arab Boxing Federations Mohammad Suleiman leaves Wednesday for Turkey to participate in the elections of the World Boxing Federation's board of directors and executive office.

Volleyball teams fight relegation

AMMAN — The 1998 Volleyball Championship resumes today with three of the seven teams playing to avoid relegation. Al Awdeh, Al Hussein and Elra clubs are at bottom of the table, while Al Wihdat secured the title and Sbabab Al Hussein jumped to second place leaving Al Baqaa and Al Karmel in third and fourth places respectively.

Pan-Arab Games to seek French expertise

AMMAN — The opening and closing ceremonies of the 9th Pan-Arab Games to be held in Amman Aug. 15-31, 1999 will seek French expertise in the field. The agreement was reached during a meeting of Games Director Isam Aridah and the cultural attache at the French embassy in Amman. An Egyptian official is also expected here this week to meet officials at the Ministry of Education who will be organising the two ceremonies.

Kingdom takes part in youth conference

AMMAN — Jordan recently concluded its participation at the 6th International Youth Conference which was held in the French city of Leon with 117 countries taking part. During the meeting, Mohammad Abed of the Ministry of Culture and Youth talked about the importance of developing and activating the role of youth and women to build an integrated society.

Compiled by Ahmad Khatib



Steffi Graf

Davenport No. 1 as
Graf moves to 9th

MIAMI (AFP) — Lindsay Davenport officially wrapped up the year as the world's No. 1 ranked women's tennis player in the final rankings released here Monday by the WTA.

Davenport maintained the top spot ahead of Switzerland's Martina Hingis, the player she replaced last month.

Hingis gained ground however, thanks to her victory over Davenport in the final of the season-ending Chase Championships in New York on Sunday.

Germany's Steffi Graf proved her resilience, finishing an injury plagued year in the top 10 — moving up from 12th to end the year at No. 9.

Graf, who spent a record 377 weeks as

World No. 1, returned from injury in November to win tournaments in Leipzig and Philadelphia, and reached the semifinals of the Chase Championships.

When she won the title in Leipzig on November 8, she had fallen to 22nd in the world and was playing as a non-seed for the first time in 13 years.

France's Nathalie Tauziat, Graf's victim in the Leipzig final two weeks ago and a quarter-final loser to Davenport at Madison Square Garden last week, dropped two places this week but still finished the year rounding out the top 10.

Patriots
get
needed
win over
Dolphins

FOXBORO (AFP) — Drew Bledsoe capped a gutsy final drive with a 25-yard touchdown pass with 29 seconds left Monday to give New England a much-needed 26-23 victory over Miami.

With New England trailing by four points, Bledsoe ignored the pain of an injured finger on his throwing hand and led the Patriots 80 yards in just under three minutes. Despite throwing a series of wobbly passes, he helped the Patriots convert two fourth downs and a pair of 3rd-and-longs before his strike to Shawn Jefferson.

Bledsoe completed 28-of-54 passes for 423 yards, two TDs and two interceptions. It was the fourth 400-yard passing game of his career. Jefferson, one of New England's few healthy receivers, had six catches for a career-high 141 yards.

The Patriots won for just the second time in their last six games but jumped right back into the AFC East division race. At 6-5, they are one game behind the three-way tie for first place among Miami, Buffalo and the New York Jets.

New England hosts Buffalo on Sunday.

The game was the first for the Patriots since owner Robert Kraft announced his intention to move the team to Hartford, Connecticut, for the 2001 season.

Dan Marino was 24-of-38 for 300 yards and a pair of touchdown passes to Oronde Gadsden for Miami, which had won 14 straight road games when leading at halftime. Gadsden caught three passes for 50 yards.

Sampras begins quest
to break No. 1 record

HANOVER (AP) — Pete Sampras began his bid to make tennis history Tuesday by beating Yevgeny Kafelnikov 6-2, 6-4 at the start of the ATP World Championship.

Sampras, seeking to become the first man to finish as No. 1 in the world for six years in row, crushed the same opponent he beat in last year's final, when he won his fourth title in the elite season-ending tournament.

He rolled through the first set with his powerful serve-and-volley game, making few errors and keeping Kafelnikov on the defensive.

Sampras also broke the Russian's serve in the opening game of the second set. But Kafelnikov battled back when his passing shots found their range and he pulled level at 3-3.

It proved to be a brief revival for Kafelnikov. Sampras won the next two games and had a match point at 5-3, but Kafelnikov hit a service winner to save himself.

Sampras had trouble closing the match. He wasted four more match points, one on a double-fault and had to fight off a break point. But two straight backhand errors by Kafelnikov finally



Pete Sampras juggles with his racket during a training session in Hanover at the ATP world championship tournament. The eight best in the world are playing in Hanover, the capital of the northern German state of Lower Saxony, Nov. 24-29 (AFP photo)

gave Sampras the victory after 66 minutes.

Karol Kucera played Carlos Moya in a later match.

Marcelo Rios, who trails Sampras by only 33 points in the rankings and has a shot at taking over the No. 1 spot in final year rankings, played the last match of the day, against Tim Henman.

Kafelnikov was the last player to clinch a place in the \$3.5 million tournament that brings together the eight players with the best results in the year. The round-robin portion consists of two four-man groups, with two players from each advancing to the semifinals.

Sampras now has a 10-2 career lead over Kafelnikov and has won their last six matches. He beat Kafelnikov in three quick sets in last year's final.

To remain ahead of Rios, Sampras basically has to keep pace with the Chilean. Rios needs to win at least two round-robin matches to have a shot at No. 1. Two players from each group advance to the semifinals.

Sampras has finished the last five years as No. 1 in the world, a record he shares with Connors, the fellow American who did it from 1974 to 1978.

NBA talks on hold despite progress rumours

NEW YORK (AFP) — National Basketball Association players and owners may be optimistic about ending the nearly five-month-old lockout, but they have apparently decided to take another day to review their positions.

As of noon Monday, the two sides had no negotiations scheduled. With a deadline looming at which the entire season could be cancelled, both sides Monday said future meetings are "up in the air."

The news came amid speculation that the sides made progress in a marathon session Friday. Negotiators for the owners and players met for more than 12 hours and emerged closer to a deal than at any point during the now 145-day lockout.

"I think what we can say for the first time is we feel we had a productive day," said NBA deputy commissioner Russ Granik following the meeting. "I can say we made some progress," added Billy

Hunter, executive director of the NBA Players Association (NBPA).

"Unfortunately, we still have some way to go. But the idea of compromise is in the atmosphere."

When the session broke, the players and owners agreed to take the weekend off but both sides agreed that they would get together in the "immediate future."

The latest bargaining session was the first since October 28. Both sides agreed that any progress achieved

was due to the increased chance of losing the entire 1998-99 season, a prospect NBA commissioner David Stern described as a very real possibility.

The 53rd NBA season was to begin November 3, but the league already has wiped out 194 games through the end of November, the first cancellations in league history. Once an accord is reached, league officials expect it to take about a month for teams to sign players and complete training camps.

The sides have been unable to reach a solution on how to divide the basketball-related income (BRI), which last year was nearly \$2 billion.

The league's latest proposal offered a 50-50 split, but the players demanded no less than 60 per cent.

However, indications are that the players may have come down to 57 per cent, the figure they received last season, while owners have apparently moved up to 52 per cent.

United Nations Development Programme
JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Jordan is inviting interested individuals to submit applications for the following post:-

Senior Clerk, Administration

Under the direct supervision of the administration Officer, the incumbent performs the following duties:-

1. Handles all customs clearance formalities and follows up with Ministry of Foreign Affairs all exemptions of household and personal effects, project equipment and imported/transit materials.
2. Responsible for all travel services, including air, overland and sea transportation: writes to and contacts airlines and travel agents, ensures maximum discounts for the UN system in Jordan and facilitates the travel of all UN, UNDP staff, UN Experts, consultants and visitors. Additionally, he/she is responsible for all the administrative arrangements for shipment of household and personal effects of UNDP and UN staff, UNVs, consultants and visitors.
3. Responsible for managing transport including scheduling of drivers/vehicles, and the maintenance of vehicles. Maintains daily and monthly records of vehicles and petrol control. Maintains related database and monitoring system. Supervises the clerk/drivers and cleaners.
4. Arranges the processing of visas, identity cards, driving licenses and other necessary documents for staff members and official visitors, as well as their dependents.
5. Maintains and up-dates inventory system of UNDP office equipment and furniture as well as of equipment issued to the projects.
6. Responsible for the procurement of office supplies and equipment and for maintenance and repair of existing office furniture and equipment.
7. Prepares correspondence according to instructions, and in accordance with standard office procedures.
8. Arranges for meeting and accommodating new arrivals and visitors.
9. Responds to queries by international personnel on general administrative matters, provides advice and ensures extension of administrative support as required.
10. Performs other duties as required.

Minimum Qualification requirements:

Education: Completion of secondary education; Diploma/Degree, preferably in the field of Management/Administration.

Experience: 6-8 years of relevant working experience. Knowledge of UN rules and regulations governing admin. services desirable.

Languages: Fluency in written and spoken Arabic and English.

Skills and Attributes:

- Strong communication skills.
- Excellent computer skills.
- Typing skills in English and Arabic language.
- Strong inter-personal and administrative skills.
- Ability to work in an international and multi-cultural environment.

Interested applicants should submit their CV's (quoting VA/98/06) to the following address, not later than 10 Dec. 1998 :-

Personnel Division

UNDP Office (UN Building) P.O. Box 941631 - Amman 11194

FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

Ground floor. Situated at Um Utheine, 5th Circle, near Amra Hotel. Consists of 2 bedrooms, sitting room, end salon, glassed veranda, central heating, telephone, separate entrance and garden.

Please call Abu Semir at: 4623725 or 5511068 after 2:00 p.m. Mobile 079/538198

Turkey Rocking Blue Plates
recommended by our Chef



Thanksgiving Specials

Thursday Dinner AND Friday Lunch

Hard Rock
CAFE

Tel.: 962-6-5934901/2, Fax: 962-6-5934907

Final 1998 WTA Tour Rankings

Lindsay Davenport (USA)	5654 pts
Martina Hingis (Svi)	5366
Monika Kucnerova (Cze)	3734
Conchita Sanchez (Spa)	3417
Kim Williams (USA)	3262
Anna Kournikova (Rus)	3226
Andreja Sekulic (USA)	2414
Michelle Pierce (Fra)	2331
Conchita Martinez (Spa)	2261
Monika Kucnerova (Cze)	2259
Nathalie Tauziat (Fra)	2256
Conchita Martinez (Spa)	2073
Monika Kucnerova (Cze)	1971
Conchita Martinez (Spa)	1898
Monika Kucnerova (Cze)	1830
Conchita Martinez (Spa)	1770
Monika Kucnerova (Cze)	1752
Conchita Martinez (Spa)	1398
Monika Kucnerova (Cze)	1389
Conchita Martinez (Spa)	1301

Lahoud takes office

BEIRUT (R) — General Emile Lahoud took office on Tuesday as Lebanon's first new president elected since the end of its devastating civil war in 1990, pledging that law enforcement topped his priorities in the free-wheeling country.

"No one is allowed to be above the law and I will be under the law," the career officer who is known for his simple lifestyle said in a speech televised from parliament following the swearing in ceremony.

"There is no future for anyone in this country, whether a leader or ruled, except with the establishment of the state of law and institutions under a democratic parliamentary system."

Lahoud, 62, previously the head of the armed forces, has enjoyed both the backing of Syria, the main power broker in Lebanon, and popular support fed by a reputation for honesty, hard work and success in rebuilding a non-sectarian army.

"It is the right of the people to know how their country's funds are spent... and it is the people's right above all to see

how justice is rewarded and to see how the hand of the thief is cut off, whoever he may be."

While he could reshape internal politics, Lahoud can have little impact on foreign policy. It is set by Syria, which has 35,000 troops in Lebanon. Lahoud emphasised in his speech the two nations' unity against Israel, which occupies parts of Lebanon and Syria.

The former naval commander took the oath of office from Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri before assembled members of parliament, diplomats and foreign parliamentarians of Lebanese descent. State television carried the ceremony live.

Lahoud is expected to take a much stronger role in directing the government than his predecessor, Elias Hrawi, 72, who was first elected in 1989 and who was overshadowed by Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri, a billionaire construction tycoon who has driven the rebuilding of Lebanon.

Like all Lebanon's presidents, under the sectarian division of offices, Lahoud is a Maronite Christian.

In the months leading up to

his installation as Lebanon's 11th elected president, there have been predictions Lahoud would clamp down on corruption and help cut through the continuing sectarian divisions slowing Lebanon's economic recovery.

"I have no magic wand that achieves dreams overnight," Lahoud warned of the heightened expectations.

"But I have the intention and will and my hand is stretched out to everyone to do everything that is correct and right."

Lahoud reinforced his reputation for avoiding the pomp associated with most Lebanese leaders, arriving in a white Cadillac without any escort, unlike the convoys of heavily armed guards and bomb detection equipment trailing other officials.

However, security was intense around the parliament building, in the heart of the old downtown that was destroyed in the 1975-90 civil war. Soldiers manned roadblocks and guards watched from rooftops. Two presidents were assassinated during the civil war.



Lebanon's new president, former army general Emile Lahoud, greets an honour guard outside parliament after being sworn in as Lebanon's 10th post-independence president (AFP photo)

Iraq names new U.N. envoy, other diplomats

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations, Nizar Hamdoun, has been replaced as part of a sweeping diplomatic reshuffle, an Iraqi official said Tuesday.

Barzan Tikriti, president Saddam Hussein's half-brother who was recalled as representative to the United Nations in Geneva in July, has also been replaced along with Iraq's representative to the Arab League, Nabil Nejm, the official told AFP.

Hamdoun's job will go to Said Al Moussawi, a diplomat accredited to the United Nations, said the official, who requested anonymity.

Hamdoun had said previously that he expected to

leave before the end of the year.

Tikriti's post will be taken up by Mohammed Al Duri, a former dean of law at Baghdad university, while Sultan Al Shawi, former chair of the Iraqi parliament's legal committee will take over Nejm's job.

Saddam's half-brother had been granted a "courtesy extension" to stay in Switzerland until the end of November. His wife died there recently, according to death notices published last week.

Tikriti, who had served in Geneva since February 1989, has strained relations with Saddam's oldest son Uday and has not been back to Iraq

since 1990 fearing for his life, according to Iraqi sources.

In other changes, former information ministry advisor Neji Al Hadithi was appointed ambassador to Vienna and Iraq's representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Ghazi Al Faisal has been named charge d'affaires to Paris, with the rank of ambassador, and Al Jumhuriya newspaper chief editor Salah Al Mukhtar will be the new ambassador to India.

The former director general for radio and television, Sabah Yassin, was appointed ambassador to Jordan, replacing Nuri Al Wais who was recalled to Baghdad.

Foreign ministry undersec-

retaries of state Saad Abdul Majid Al Faisal and Abdul Jabbar Al Duri have been named ambassadors to Yemen and Morocco.

The new ambassadors are expected to begin their new jobs within one and a half months, the Iraqi official said.

A total of 25 Iraqi diplomats posted abroad were affected by the most sweeping reshuffle of Iraqi diplomats since the 1991 Gulf war.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed Said Al Sahhaf met Tuesday with the new ambassadors whom he had recommended "to boost Iraq's diplomatic activities on lifting the embargo" imposed on the country in 1990 after it invaded Kuwait.

Three dead, four injured in Yemen car bomb blast

SANAA (AFP) — Three people were killed and four injured when a car bomb exploded Tuesday near the German embassy in Sanaa, officials said.

A three-year-old child sitting in a car parked near the vehicle which exploded was among those killed in the 11:00 a.m. local time explosion, an interior ministry statement said.

According to a police official, the other two killed were "a German embassy security guard and a second lieutenant with the Yemeni police force."

Sanaa authorities have opened an investigation "to discover the motives behind the crime," said the official who asked not to be named.

He said the explosion "shattered the German embassy's windows and those of two nearby houses"

belonging to the Yemeni Minister for Judicial Affairs Abdullah Ahmad Ghanem and Sheikh Ahmad Ben Shajeh, head of a tribe from the Saada region on the border with Saudi Arabia.

The sheikh had played a role in Yemeni-Saudi border negotiations, sources in Sanaa said.

Saudi Arabia and Yemen have been holding talks since 1995 on the demarcation of their common land and sea borders which have never been fixed.

The German foreign ministry confirmed that a bomb had exploded outside the German embassy in Sanaa but said the bombing did not appear to have been aimed at the embassy.

The ministry spokesman gave no further details. Yemen has been rocked by violent unrest since June

Following a government decision to raise the price of fuel and some basic foods as part of an economic recovery programme.

Two people were killed Sept. 23 when TNT hidden in a car in southern Dhaleh province exploded. Three days earlier, two people were killed and 27 others wounded in a bombing in a market in Aden.

According to the Yemeni press, 52 people have died and more than 200 been injured in the disturbances.

Sanaa has accused Yemenis abroad of being behind attacks on public buildings and installations.

In September the government initiated a crackdown on those suspected of involvement in the unrest. In October, three Yemenis were executed for acts of sabotage and possessing explosives and weapons.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Clinton trying to restart Israel-Syria talks

TEL AVIV (AP) — U.S. President Bill Clinton told Israeli and Syrian leaders he is willing to make an immediate, personal effort to help restart peace talks between the two countries, an Israeli newspaper reported Tuesday. In a recent conversation with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Clinton said he had sent a message on the subject to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, the daily said. "I am willing to get personally involved to achieve a peace agreement if the two sides are willing," Clinton wrote to Assad, according to the newspaper. "I am willing to participate in such efforts as soon as possible, on condition that the sides are serious and prepared for concessions that will lead to a peace agreement," the message continued.

Mossad official quits after Cyprus blunder

TEL AVIV (R) — A high-ranking operations officer in Israel's Mossad intelligence agency has resigned following the arrest of two suspected Israeli spies in Cyprus earlier this month, an Israeli newspaper said on Tuesday. The report in the Ha'aretz daily said Mossad chief Efraim Halevy had accepted the resignation of the official, identified only as "Yud," the Hebrew first letter of his name. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's spokesman declined to comment. Cypriot police arrested two Israelis, Udi Hargov and Igal Damary, on Nov. 7 after receiving reports of suspect Israeli activity in a sensitive military area.

Woman collapses after heroin packet bursts

MANAMA (AFP) — A woman is in intensive care in a Bahraini hospital after one of 20 heroin packets she was carrying in her stomach burst, the Gulf Daily News said Tuesday. The Lebanese-born Australian woman was rushed to hospital from Bahrain International Airport suffering from a massive overdose. She was travelling to Australia from Beirut, via Bahrain, the daily said. Nurses at the hospital found a further 15 heroin packets hidden inside the woman's hair, which had been tied up into a bun, and 20 packets inside a condom which had been inserted into a body cavity. The woman regained consciousness and told hospital staff she had also swallowed 20 heroin packets, which were then flushed out with a laxative.

Khatami orders action on dissident killings

TEHRAN (R) — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami on Tuesday ordered urgent investigations into the murder of a veteran opposition leader and his wife, saying the people had to be reassured the government could uphold the law. "It is necessary that a special committee be set up to seriously follow up the case of the crime... so that God willing the perpetrators would promptly be identified and pay for their crime," state television quoted Khatami as saying in a letter to Interior Minister Abdolvahed Mousavi-Lari. "Besides being heinous, this crime is cause for regret and concern that it could create doubts in people's minds about the government and the system's ability to provide security and stability for citizens, and that criminals... could become more brazen," Khatami said.

Chad, Libya officials open their border

N'DJAMENA (AFP) — Chad and Libya officially opened their border at a ceremony in the remote Tibesti region. Chad Interior Minister Oumarou Djibrillah and his Libyan counterpart Mahamat Mahmoud Alhidjazi presided at the ceremonies. Chadian radio reported. Radio Chad said the ceremony began on the Chad side at Ounianga where the Libyans have already built huts for use as offices. The two ministers then crossed the border to inaugurate the Libyan border post of Matan Sarra. Chadian authorities say the aim is to "permit the movement of goods and people between the two countries."

EU backs Italy over Turkish boycott threat

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The European Union on Tuesday offered backing for Italy in its war-of-words with Turkey over the fate of rebel Kurd leader Abdullah Ocalan.

European Commission President Jacques Santer warned that Brussels could impose economic sanctions if the Turkish government or publicly-owned companies acted on threats to boycott Italian companies because of Rome's refusal to extradite the leader of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK).

After meeting Italian Premier Massimo d'Alema here, Santer said a boycott would be a "clear violation" both of the 1963 EU-Turkey Association Agreement and the customs union between them that was introduced in 1996.

"If such a boycott were officially decided, which I hope will not happen, it would be important to organise consultations immediately," Santer said.

If these did not produce a satisfactory result the EU "could

then decide on retaliatory measures," he said.

Santer underlined that, in its decision not to extradite Ocalan, Italy had acted with respect for rights enshrined in the Italian constitution and the Schengen agreement on free movement between EU countries.

The Italian constitution forbids extradition to a country which has the death penalty, as Turkey has.

Under Schengen, Italy, as the first EU country entered by Ocalan, is obliged to consider his request for political asylum. D'Alema praised Santer for "reminding Turkey of its duties and obligations," and suggested it was already clear that Ankara was in breach of its accords with the EU.

An announcement by the Turkish defence minister that Italian companies would be excluded from tenders and the authorities' decision to forbid the broadcast of Italian television channels Rai-1 and Rai-3 on Turkish cable TV clearly amounted to a "state boycott," D'Alema said.

Israel indicts operators of Jewish settler pirate radio

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli state prosecutors issued indictments Tuesday against the operators of a pirate radio station that has been run by Jewish settlers for years with relative impunity, officials said.

Attorney General Eliyahu Ruinstein ordered indictments against more than a dozen people involved in Channel 7, which broadcasts from offices in a West Bank settlement and Tel Aviv.

Settler leaders immediately denounced the indictments as "anti-democratic."

"The state's attorney, police and the Israeli left are infringing upon the

freedom of speech of the right," Israeli Radio quoted one unidentified worker at Channel 7 as saying.

Ruinstein issued a ruling in April declaring that Channel 7 was illegal and should be shut down unless the government moved to authorise its broadcasts.

Ruinstein's announcement prompted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, which relies on the support of pro-settlement groups, to take steps towards authorising "regional radio stations" including Channel 7.

But the legislation was never completed, leading to Tuesday's decision to

indict the radio station's operators.

Legal authorities had long sought to close Channel 7, which along with other pirate radios disrupts authorised radio communications, notably at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport.

But the Shin Bet internal security service warned that such action would spark violence by activist settlers.

Channel 7 is the preferred radio of the 160,000 Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Netanyahu pledged ahead of his election in May 1996 to legalise the station but has yet to honour the promise.

Opening of airport breaks sense of Gaza siege

RAFAH (AFP) — The Palestinians of Gaza have not had a great deal to celebrate in the last five years since the signing of the first Oslo peace accords with Israel.

But celebrate they did by the thousands Tuesday with the opening of the Gaza International Airport — a gateway to the world for a people still encircled by the Israeli army despite five years of peace efforts.

As police bands played national songs, more than 4,000 Palestinians, including policemen and senior officials of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), cheered and danced as the first aeroplanes landed Tuesday.

It was difficult to find a local Palestinian who did not welcome the airport as a way of escaping the stifling confines of the narrow strip of land along the Mediterranean which was captured by Israel in 1967 and partial-

ly banded over to Yasser Arafat's PNA in 1994.

"If an old person became ill it took them 10 hours to travel to Cairo by car," said Jamal Abdullah, a local tailor and sports coach who made the half-hour trip from Gaza City to Rafah to see the airport open.

"But now for a hundred dollars they can get there in an hour," he said.

Abdullah exaggerated a little. The flight between Cairo and Gaza may take an hour but the check-in and security procedures will add at least three hours to that. But Abdullah had a point.

With the signing of the Oslo accords Gazans obtained a measure of political autonomy but, economically, became virtual prisoners in their own homes because of the difficulties of getting out of the Gaza Strip.

Even during the six-year-long intifada uprising against Israeli

occupation which forced Israel to the negotiating table, Gazans could travel to Israel in search of work.

After the Oslo accords came into effect in 1994, only 30,000 Gazans were allowed through into Israel to work each day.

And, unlike the West Bank, Gazans have not had the illegal option of finding work in Israel as the Strip is surrounded by heavily-policed security fencing designed to keep residents in.

For the past five years the only way out of the Gaza Strip for normal Palestinians has been the Rafah crossing into Egypt and the Erez crossing into Israel, the latter fraught with intensive Israeli security checks.

The opening of Gaza International Airport on Tuesday has provided a crucial third outlet into the outside world and one that at least seems exclusively Palestinian.

"Our airport is a symbol of national sovereignty and our gateway to the outside world," as one banner put it.

"Together and equally on the path to independence and freedom," said the legend underneath.

It may well be that some of the high hopes expressed unanimously as the first planes landed are not fully realised.

The airport may be subject to Israeli closure, the security arrangements may prove to be more onerous than Gazans expect and the tickets could prove to be beyond the reach of most Palestinians.

But Tuesday was a day for celebration and no one was going to be deflected from that.

"Who knows?" asked the sports coach Abdullah. "Maybe when the World Cup comes around in four years time we will be able to fly direct to Japan. Bit by bit we are getting there."

Female prison inmates demand sex

SANTO DOMINGO (AP) — Demanding their right to have sexual relations with their partners, 70 women inmates created an uproar at a prison in the northern Dominican Republic. The women launched a noisy protest Sunday, heaving objects against the rails of their overcrowded prison cell. "We want sex, that's our main demand, and we're going to fight for it because we are human beings just as men are," Janet Altamira Sanchez, a spokeswoman for the protesters, said Monday. Male prisoners in the Dominican Republic are allowed to have sex with their partners, but judicial authorities had rejected the women's demand, saying it would turn the prison into a maternity home.

Kitten rescues family, but not himself

HELSINKI (AP) — Disturbed by a fire in the night, a kitten raced around frantically, waking up a family and saving it from the raging flames. But 3-month-old Topi was unable to escape the flames himself, the Iltä-Sanomats newspaper reported Monday. "Without Topi, we would've been engulfed by the flames," said Heikki Tahvanainen, who narrowly escaped with his wife and 18-month-old son. Tahvanainen woke to a loud sound at 2 a.m. on Sunday, and found Topi leaping about in the room next door. Then he saw a strange glow under the kitchen door. Topi likely hid in some corner and perished in the flames, Tahvanainen told Iltä-Sanomats.

'Kiss' members blast audience

EAST RUTHERFORD (AP) — Members of the rock group Kiss gave a tongue-lashing to the crowd after someone shined a laser pointer in drummer Peter Criss' eyes. Criss finished singing the ballad "Beth" at the Continental Airlines Arena on Sunday and then nearly stormed off the stage, furious that someone was hindering him with one of the hand-held electronic devices. He rushed to the side of the stage, grabbed a microphone and screamed a profanity at the responsible party. Lead singer Paul Stanley challenged whoever was shining the beam at band members to fight him on stage.

Monroe tops Playboy's sexiest females list

CHICAGO (R) — Marilyn Monroe topped the list of Playboy magazine's 100 sexiest female stars of the 20th century, followed by Jayne Mansfield, Raquel Welch, Brigitte Bardot and Cindy Crawford, the publication announced. Completing Playboy's top 10 selections, who will appear in a special 24-page pictorial in Playboy's January issue, were Sophia Loren, Elizabeth Taylor, Pamela Anderson, Bo Derek and Jean Harlow.

Dane to paint Charles' portrait

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — A young Danish painter, 29-year-old Thomas Kluge, has been selected to paint a portrait of Prince Charles, Danish daily Berlingske Tidende said on Tuesday. The painter was chosen by a group from the Prince's Trust Association, which helps promote the careers of young artists. The portrait will be a gift to Prince Charles from the organisation on its 10th anniversary in 1999. Charles is the patron of the trust.

Handwritten signature: 12/25/98